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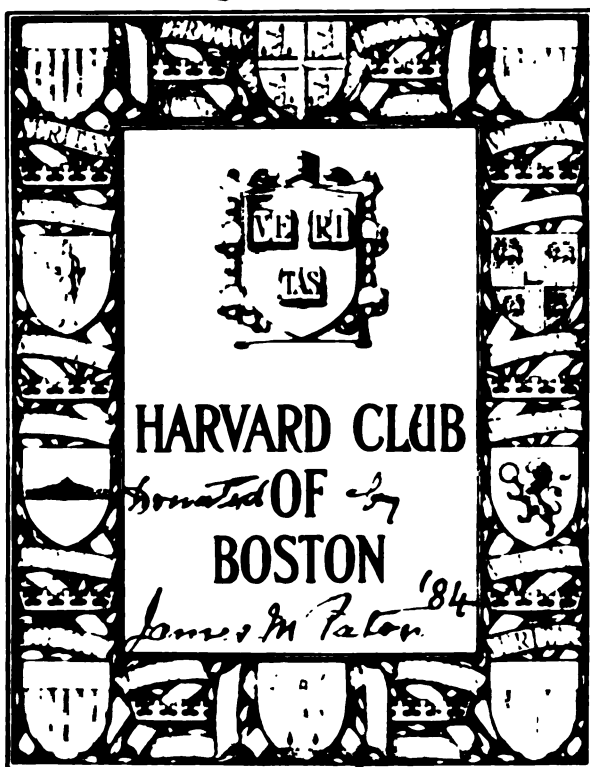
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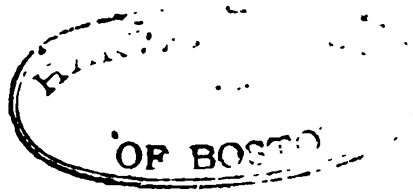
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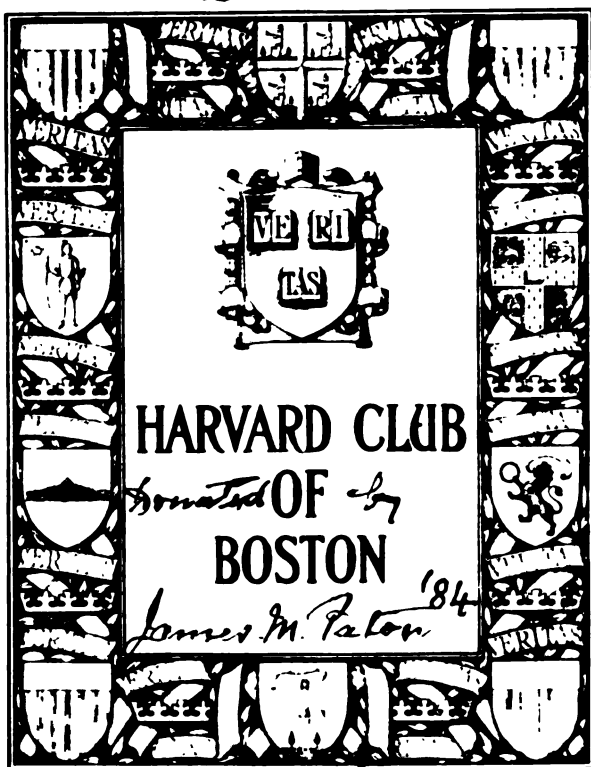
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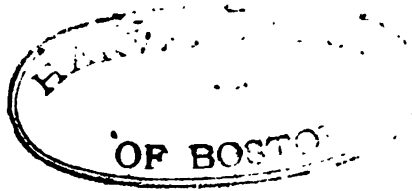
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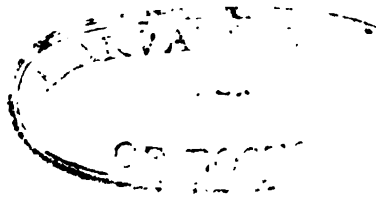












*Of this first edition of "The Letters of Washington Irving to Henry Brevoort" (limited to Two Hundred and Fifty-five sets printed on special Strathmore paper, and bound in two volumes), Two Hundred and Twenty-five sets are offered for sale. No other edition will be issued in this form.*

*This is No. 107.*

*G. P. Putnam & Sons*

*October, 1915.*







Washington Irving

Washington Irving

Washington Irving





THE LETTERS OF  
WASHINGTON IRVING  
TO  
HENRY BREVOORT

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY  
GEORGE S. HELLMAN

*"Sub Sole  
Sub Umbra  
Virens"*

*IN TWO VOLUMES*  
*VOLUME ONE*

NEW YORK  
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
The Knickerbocker Press  
1915







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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

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other than were Irving and Putnam. Each in turn was able to render to the other at a time of need most valuable service. At a period late in his life, when Irving had received a discouraging report from his earlier publishers that his books were no longer attractive to the public and that there was no continued demand that justified the printing of new editions, Mr. Putnam put before the author a proposition for a complete and uniform edition which should include, in addition to the new books that Irving had in train, these earlier volumes, such, for instance, as the *Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall*, that had been dismissed by their publishers as belonging to "dead literature."

The enterprise of Mr. Putnam more than justified the expectations of the publisher and the hopes of the author, and the publisher's sympathetic labour constituted an important factor in perpetuating and extending the fame of Irving. The letter below quoted gives

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evidence that Irving was large enough as a man and wide-minded enough as an author to make frank acknowledgment of the value of the service rendered by his publisher.

"SUNNYSIDE, December 27, 1852.

"Let me say how sensibly I appreciate the kind tone and expressions of your letter. You talk of obligations to me, but I am conscious of none that have not been fully counterbalanced on your part; and I take pleasure in expressing the great satisfaction I have derived, throughout all our intercourse, from your amiable, obliging, and honourable conduct. Indeed, I never had dealings with any man, whether in the way of business or friendship, more perfectly free from any alloy.

"That those dealings have been profitable is mainly owing to your own sagacity and enterprise. You had confidence in the continued vitality of my writings. You called them again into active existence and gave to them a circulation that has, I believe, surprised even yourself. In rejoicing at their success, my satisfaction is doubly enhanced by the idea that you share in the benefits derived from it. . . .

"I remain, very truly and heartily, yours

"WASHINGTON IRVING.

"To GEORGE P. PUTNAM, ESQ."

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The opportunity of the author to serve his friend, the publisher, came five years later. Mr. Putnam's firm was involved in the financial troubles that in 1857 undermined the business of the country and that proved particularly serious for publishing undertakings; and the plates of Irving's works came into the control of the author.

Irving received propositions from a number of publishing houses to take charge of the books, the value of which had now been fully recognized. He took the ground, however, that the books must remain in the hands of the Putnam publishing concern as long as the business was being carried on by a Putnam. He arranged that the plates which had come into his ownership should, in consideration of certain annual payments, again become the property of the publisher. The returns secured by Mr. Putnam from the sale of the books during the two years that remained of the author's life and for his nieces, after his

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death, showed that the author's confidence had not been misplaced.

The present volumes contain unprinted material of unusual and intimate interest, which adds to our knowledge of the character of the great author. This production would not have been possible except with the friendly coöperation of the present owners of the manuscripts of these letters, and for this coöperation the publishers desire to express on their own behalf, and on that of the public generally, the fullest recognition.

The first acknowledgment is due to Mr. Isaac Newton Seligman, from whose famous collection of Irvingiana have been placed at the disposal of the publishers for use in this work the greater number of the letters written by Irving to Henry Brevoort. Mr. Seligman has for years interested himself in bringing together distinctive editions and original manuscripts of Irving's works. The library in his home at Irvington, which adjoins the

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grounds at Sunnyside, contains a fascinating collection of material reminiscent of this most charming of authors. Mr. Seligman's public spirit is familiar to the community in which he lives, and he has taken a personal interest in furthering the publication of a work that should confirm and extend the memory of his favourite American author.

Cordial thanks are also due to Dr. Roderick Terry for a valuable series of letters, which he has, in like manner, placed at the disposal of the editor and the publishers. Dr. Terry belongs to a family whose home was for many years at Irvington. He has personal memory of the old-fashioned courtesy with which their neighbour, the great author, lifted his hat in response to the salute of his small neighbours, the Terry boys, as they drove by in their pony cart. He also feels a personal interest in the opportunity of collaborating in the production of a work recalling the memory of Irving.

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Nine of the letters written to Henry Brevoort come from the library of the editor, Mr. Hellman, who has further drawn upon his collection of the papers of Irving in presenting in his Introduction material that had not hitherto found its way into print.

Acknowledgments are also due for friendly courtesy and for material to Mr. William Henry Brevoort, Mr. William Harris Arnold, Mr. Christian Gerhardt, and Mr. Thomas F. Madigan. Through the friendly service of this group of scholars the publishers are able to present a series that is substantially complete. The volumes include all but six or seven of the letters written by Washington Irving to a man who was the nearest, most sympathetic, and most loyal of his friends.

G. H. P.

NEW YORK, June 10, 1915.





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## INTRODUCTION

THE names of the two friends who figure in this correspondence have been made in many ways familiar to the New Yorker of to-day. One of our thoroughfares, reluctantly yielding old nooks and corners to the ever-grasping fingers of commerce, still retains some old-time flavor that one must hope will never quite disappear from Irving Place. Hotels, banks, schools, theatres, and business concerns of almost every conceivable nature have called into requisition the name of Irving. Nor shall we fail to find how, to a less extent yet similarly, has been employed the name of Brevoort, most notably in the delightful hostelry in that part of town which, in old days, included the farm of this noted family. But while these two names still play their part in the diversified life of our city, the individuals whose

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character and achievement justified their significance have become remote figures. To renew our acquaintance with them, and to be led under their guidance into the pathways of the past, is the rich guerdon of those who shall read the letters of Washington Irving to Henry Brevoort.

The life of Irving, first and still the most distinguished of New York authors, has been written once and again; no need, therefore, of any lengthy rehearsal here, or critical estimate of his writings. One point alone shall be accentuated: and that is, in the pages of few other authors can we—restless, hurried, and over-practical men and women, of a restless, hurried, and over-practical age—find more gracious and leisurely wisdom, more courteous human philosophy than in the pages of Irving. His is the tonic of quiet art.

Henry Brevoort, Jr., the cultivated, efficient, and affluent citizen of the last century, be-

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longed to a family that came to America almost three hundred years ago. A curious illustration of how distinguished his family yet remains in present-day estimation is shown in the *World's Almanac*, which, in its genealogy of well-known American families, still records the fact that the wife of the first John Jacob Astor was the cousin of Henry Brevoort. The oldest living descendant of the seventeenth-century founder of this family, has, with appreciated courtesy, given me information concerning his ancestors; and from a letter of Mr. James Renwick Brevoort, the nephew of Irving's friend, are quoted the following passages:

"My father lived in the country and rarely spoke about family matters, and my uncle died while I was yet a boy. I have only a recollection of him and of his residence with the large garden, north of Ninth Street and Fifth Avenue.

"I have heard my father say that Mr. Irving frequently came to see my grand-

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father to get facts and suggestions for his Knickerbocker History of New York.

"Our family is descended from Heinrich Jan Van Brevoort who emigrated, together with his brother whose name I do not know, from Groningen in the north of Holland in the year 1642, Heinrich coming to Nieuw Amsterdam and the other brother to the Island of Nassau, now Long Island. There seem to have been two quite different types of the family, one tall, strong and light, with blue eyes, the other rather short, thick set, with dark eyes and hair. To the former belonged my grandfather and my father. My uncle Henry was of the short dark type. I have never heard anything of the descendants of the one who went to Nassau. My grandmother's name was Whetten, whose family were more or less seafaring people. My uncle William, 2nd son of my grandfather, was also a captain, and got out of N. Y. during the English blockade 1814-15 and took his vessel to sea. Besides my uncles Henry and William there was a younger brother who died in New Orleans of yellow fever when a young man, and Margaret who married James Renwick, afterwards Professor of Chemistry

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and Physics in Columbia College. The Renwicks during my uncle's professorship of course lived in one of (the) college houses; afterwards, at the corner of Fifth Av. and Ninth Street. Henry had two sons, James Carson and Henry W.—four daughters, Elizabeth, Meta, Constance and Edith. My uncle Henry's wife was from Charleston, S. C., her maiden name, Laura Carson.—My Uncle Henry as probably you know was known to most of the literary people of his day, and wrote very well himself—chiefly, I think, as critic.—At one time my grandfather owned property from 8th Street and Fourth Avenue to 13th Street, and west, I think, beyond Sixth Avenue. As the city advanced it of course became necessary to sell a good deal of the property. My grandfather died in 1840, in the 94th year of his age. It was said in the family that the bricks which built the original homestead were brought from Holland. The front of the old house which was added long after was of wood with a piazza fronting on the then Bowerie. The house stood facing what is now 11th St.; this was prevented from being put through from 4th Av. to Broadway by my grandfather. There was an

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old Dutch barn standing between 4th Av. and Broadway, the frame of which was hewn from oak timbers grown on the place. I have often heard my father say that, in *his* young days, there was no pavement above Chatham Square. Then the old Homestead was quite out of the City, and people would drive up to see my grandfather on a Sunday, he always having some sort of curious animal or bird of which he was fond of collecting. At one time he had a bear chained in his water melon patch west of B'way. Also a couple of deer. My grandfather was wheelwright by trade, and the shop formed a part of that old barn. In the old days traps were set on the asparagus beds and quails caught about where 10th Street and Broadway now are.

"In the early part of my uncle's life, he was in the employ of the original John Jacob Astor, and made long journeys into the then wilderness of the West to collect pelts for Astor, bringing them by packhorses and canoes to Albany, thence by sloop to N. Y.

"It was always said in the family that he was the first white man who ever saw the straits of Mackinaw—at that (time) spelled Mackinack."

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Delightful it is to read thus of bears and deer on Broadway and of the old days when quails were caught where now the noise of traffic would drown the voices of many birds. Washington Irving was born in William Street in 1783, when the final treaty, bringing with it the fruits of the American Revolution, had not yet been signed between England and the United States, and the city of Irving's birth was still a town containing fewer inhabitants than are now housed in one or two square blocks of the crowded city of to-day. It was a sociable and intimate little city in which Irving and Brevoort grew to manhood, and perhaps the chief charm in the early letters, which began with the year 1807, is to be found in the glimpses they give of society, not alone in New York, but also in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. New York was then, in such contradiction to the present, a city of New Yorkers. We have indeed gained much from the influx of many races and nations;



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yet a gain that does not altogether compensate for the civic solidarity of a day long past. Through the letters of Irving to Brevoort we lay firmer hold on traditions and re-enter into a heritage that the dwellers in our powerful but nervous, crude yet impressive city, have been prone to overlook.

From the point of view of the literary historian, the present volumes are of more than ordinary significance in that the manuscripts on which they are based have, for the most part, remained heretofore unpublished. The correspondence begins and ends with hitherto unknown letters. The intervening missives were, to some extent, drawn upon by Irving's nephew, Pierre M. Irving, in the "Life and Letters" issued some fifty years ago; but, even for this, the editor availed himself mainly of excerpts; and while some of the letters were printed at considerable length, others were not used at all. Of the more than ninety now included, the manuscripts of, I believe, seven

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are unobtainable. In some of these instances, recourse has been had to the passages from them in the biography by Irving's nephew. Apart from these, the letters are given in full, with proper names that, for obvious reasons, were omitted in the publication shortly after Irving's death.

With no other friend did Washington Irving carry on so voluminous a correspondence as with Henry Brevoort. It forms a record of friendship such as the annals of our literature nowhere parallels. It is not an exciting document; it contains, indeed, introspective analyses, but not in the morbid and sometimes thrilling manner to which later literary correspondences have accustomed us; and the veil of Irving's reserve is only now and then lifted to disclose the precious intimacies of his chivalrous soul. Often the tribulations of business affairs interpose their shadows; but, for the most part, it is a sane and cheerful record of a famous life.

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And now, following the path of these letters, let us accompany Irving down the stream of the years. We find him first a genial, light-hearted youth of twenty-four, preparing the publication of that book which is more intimately associated than any other with the name and traditions of our city—the *History of New York* by Diedrich Knickerbocker. He writes from Philadelphia to Brevoort of the “minute and curious facts” which he has found in manuscripts in the Philadelphia Library, obliging him to make alterations in the first volume; and he asks his friend to forward the inscription on old Peter Stuyvesant’s tombstone, the inscription which may still be seen in the church of St. Mark’s in the Bouwerie. Irving’s “delectable history” is, of course, a kindly satire on the old Dutch inhabitants, a volume that does not come into the class of scholarly works based on impartial research; but its position remains uncontroverted as the earliest production of an Amer-

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ican man of letters to evoke the cordial praise and to awaken the sympathetic merriment of European readers. Not until 1809, after a series of notices in the *Evening Post* advertising the disappearance of its supposititious author, was the book published, "to discharge certain debts" (as the advertisement had it) "of Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker, the old gentleman whose sudden and mysterious disappearance has been noticed." The success of Irving's humorous history was immediate, excepting among some of the descendants of those Dutch ancestors whom he satirized; and even now, after the lapse of more than a century, our city retains the sobriquet of Father Knickerbocker.

In the next few letters to Brevoort we move with Irving among a host of friends, for he was a most sociable young fellow, equally at home with men and women and children. The name of Mary Fairlie brings up recollections of one of the brilliant belles of Philadelphia, and

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later the wife of the actor-manager Thomas A. Cooper. Among the private papers of Irving I find a letter written to him from this young girl who as "Sophy Sparkle" appears in *Salmagundi*, the whimsical magazine, joint venture of Irving and Paulding and Irving's brother William, which through its course of twenty numbers stimulated and amused New York in 1807. From this letter of Mary Fairlie, a few passages may be chosen to indicate the light-heartedness of the correspondence which she and Irving exchanged. "There was a brilliant assembly, last night, but solitude," she writes, "offered charms more congenial to my soul, and I did not go. I have grown very romantic of late, and shun the world, am enchanted with retirement, and if the fine weather continues, you may be surprised on your return to find me with book in my hand, sitting in the street, on the brink of a gutter under the shade of one of our great poplars. All your friends here

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(barring the anguish which your departure has caused them) remain in perfect state of salubrity. The Hoffmans are all in good condition—Ann says *you are a shabby dog* for not writing to her."

The mention of the Hoffmans awakens a recollection of that event which overshadows all others in the record of Irving's life. His devotion to Matilda Hoffman, who died the year after Mary Fairlie's letter was written, continued long after her lovely life had ended. In his letter to Brevoort of May 11th, 1809, he writes from the home at Kinderhook of his friend Van Ness of the calmness and serenity with which the hours move along; but even so, between the lines there is to be found, with that reticence of expression which characterizes similar allusions in later years to the loss which had overwhelmed him at life's threshold, sentences evidencing the keenness of his grief.

It was in this same year that steamboat

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navigation began with Robert Fulton's successful voyage on the Hudson, and the mention of these early steamboats by Irving records, in passing, the discovery that has so radically affected the commerce and the intercommunication of nations. In a more personal way we are brought into contact with events relating to the social history of early New York, referred to in Irving's comments on the home in the New Jersey highlands of Gouverneur Kemble, where the "Lads of Kilkenny" often met for their frolics. In addition to Irving, Kemble, and Brevoort, there were James Paulding, Henry Ogden, Peter Irving, and Peter Kemble among the "nine worthies" who constituted the little group so known; and in later life there are no references in Irving's letters more replete with affectionate sentiment than those in which he recalls the pastimes of this circle of friends. Irving at this time was still an inmate of his mother's house at the northwest corner of William and

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Ann Streets. A little later—early in 1811—we find him sharing bachelor quarters with Brevoort, on Broadway, near Bowling Green. Brevoort's library may have been one of the inducements to this change; certainly these books proved a source of consolation when his friend went to Europe in 1812, remaining abroad for almost two years. It was during this journey that Brevoort met Walter Scott to whose attention he so successfully brought the writings of Irving. On Brevoort's return to America, the two friends continued dwelling together at "a choice house kept on a most liberal scale." This house stood at the corner of Rector and Greenwich Streets, and was kept by the Mrs. Bradish to whom, in the course of his letters, Irving constantly sends the kindest of messages. Among its other inmates were Commodore Decatur and his wife, Captain Porter, the Scotchman Johnson, the Portuguese Sampayo, the wine merchant March, and other per-



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sonages that figure in the correspondence with Brevoort.

These old homes are now but memories; yet New York still retains various houses reminiscent of Irving and his friends. The dwelling of his uncle in Irving Place is one; another is the Society Library in University Place. Irving was a trustee of this institution, in whose halls there were heard the eloquence of Emerson, and the dithyrambs of Poe's *Eureka*. A third is the Renwick mansion, at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Ninth Street. Here the imagination wanders from the lyric years of Robert Burns, to our own days made brighter by the wit of Mark Twain, whose last years were lived in this old house. Jane Renwick, the mother of Irving's friend—James, the Columbia professor—was, in her girlhood in Dumfriesshire, admired of the poet, and of her Burns wrote:

*"While men have eyes or ears or taste  
She'll always find a lover."*

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Reverting to the year 1811 we shall meet with several lengthy letters written to Brevoort from the city of Washington. The first of these recounts Irving's journey to the capital by way of Baltimore—a journey “as full of adventurous matter and dire peril as one of Scott's pantomimic, melodramatic, romantic tales.” Those were the days of the stage-coaches and amusing conversations with fellow-passengers; nor with less humor does Irving describe figures in Washington life of those times, and “the blazing splendour of Mrs. Madison's drawing-room.” Particularly significant in connection with the development of his character is his statement in one of his letters from the capital, that he does not suffer party feelings to bias his mind; for Washington Irving is the only instance in American history of a man who, not alone keeping aloof from partisanship, but even experiencing a decided aversion to all political office, was offered high positions in many

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fields of public life. That he was Minister to Spain is, of course, known to everyone; that he could have had, for the asking, a place in Congress is no less assured a fact; and that the Tammany Society "unanimously and vociferously" nominated the shy and stainless Irving to be Mayor of New York remains one of the most amusing of anomalous events in the records of our city.

During the years that preceded the War of 1812, Irving's main interest, outside of the round of social pleasures with his friends, was, I am inclined to think, not so much in literature as in the drama. We find him telling Brevoort that he has prolonged his stay at Philadelphia (in April, 1811) in order to see Cooke act as Lear. After comparing him with Cooper and Kemble, he writes at length of his performance, likening it to a "masterpiece of ancient statuary." In all his dramatic criticisms, Irving is able to separate essential excellence from "all the

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garish ornaments in which unskilfulness takes refuge."

With the war between England and America a serious note enters into Irving's correspondence. Here he warns his friends of suspected spies, and comments on the unsettled state of the times with more mature understanding. But, even so, in such a letter as that of July 8th, 1812, he finds relaxation in social gossip and in amusing anecdotes concerning acquaintances. We meet with mention of the Rhinelanders, the Renwicks, and the Livingstons; we join Irving at a superb dinner given to the naval heroes, at which all the great eaters and drinkers of the city are present; and hear talk of armies, navies, and battles. The military spirit overtakes our gentle hero. He joins the staff of Governor Tompkins, and sends Brevoort accounts from Albany of the duties of his station and the progress of the campaign. On the reverse of the letter of September 26th, 1814, Brevoort

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has recorded in his autograph a long list of firms that had failed within the space of a fortnight, a record that has for us the interest of coincidence when we reflect that just a century later England was to become involved in a far more decisive war.

The next year, war ended, Irving was free to gratify his wish to revisit Europe, ten years after his first journey abroad. When, on board the ship "Mexico," at Sandy Hook, he wrote his farewell letter to Brevoort, he did not foresee how long a time would intervene or how many events affecting his life would occur before he was again to return to the city of his affection.

The long series of letters, some of them containing thousands of words, in the satisfactory epistolary manner of the last century, that at comparatively short intervals he sent to Brevoort during the years in England, touch not alone on many phases of his own activities, but refer with the interest of a first-hand

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observer to numerous important events and notable characters of the early nineteenth century. Napoleon and Waterloo and the Treaty of Ghent; Scott and Campbell and Isaac D'Israeli; soldiers like the Duke of Wellington; statesmen, publishers, critics, actors and painters, enter these pages, replete also with references to the activities of Irving, in connection with those business affairs which were to end, in one way so disastrously, in the failure of his brothers' firm with which he was associated;—and throughout there is talk of old friends, and of a longing for home. Brevoort had in the meanwhile not remained alone the pleasant companion of youthful days, but had developed into the generous adviser of Irving on all matters. It was, therefore, but natural that when, with the downfall of business plans, there came the strongest of impulses to devote his life to literature, Irving should look to Brevoort for such coöperation as a friend might offer.

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Thus we have him taking charge of the publication of the *Sketch Book* in America, attending to the copyright, printing, and sale. In sending Brevoort the manuscript, Irving wrote: "I seek only to blow a flute of accompaniment in the national concert; and leave others to play the fiddle and French horn." But despite the modest attitude of its author, the *Sketch Book* did more than confirm Irving's own fame: it established the right of American letters to be accorded independent recognition. Caustic foreign critics who had hitherto looked upon our literature as a toddling and imitative infant, holding on to the apron strings of its English mother, realized that with Irving the time had come when it *was* worth while to read an American book.

At the age of thirty-six years, Irving had thus become an object of national pride. "Vanity," he writes, "could not bring the tears into my eyes as they have been brought by the

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kindness of my countrymen"; and in another letter to Brevoort, wherein he mentions *Knickerbocker's History* and *Salmagundi*, as well as the *Sketch Book*, we find him saying: "There is something delightful to me in the idea that you in a manner stand godfather to all my children; I feel as if it were a new tie that binds us together."

By Nicholas Carter, Irving's friend who later became the author of a volume entitled *Letters from Europe*, was preserved an anecdote that amusingly and convincingly emphasizes the vogue of the *Sketch Book*. An English lady and her daughter were visiting an Italian gallery which contained a bust of George Washington. Carter overheard their conversation: "Mother, who was Washington?" asked the young lady, after gazing a short while at the bust. "Why, my dear, don't you know?" was the astonished reply. "He wrote the *Sketch Book*."

While Irving was engaged on this work



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his friend Commodore Decatur was hoping that he would accept a place in the Navy Board at Washington, a first clerkship corresponding approximately to that of under-Secretary in England. Irving's brother William sought to persuade his acceptance of this position; and here, among Irving's papers, we find William's letter in its entirety. So closely allied are the sentiments in its concluding portion to those that animated Washington Irving himself as he grew older, that with sympathetic pleasure we rescue from oblivion the lines with which William ends his missive. He speaks of his own "only delight—retirement and seclusion from the world," and then goes on: "I never was cut out for a great politician. Trouble of every kind annoys me—I abominate parade, and like the maid servant who, when her mistress was to have a large company, asked for her supper that she might go to bed out of the way, I am for withdrawing from every scene of tumult

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or confusion. A levee night is my abomination—and a public dinner my abhorrence. . . . I have, therefore, withdrawn, and feel most sensibly the truth of the proverb that 'home is home though never so homely.'"

If Irving, in the closing years of his life at Sunnyside, had had a younger brother in whom to confide, these might have been the identical words which he would have written. But the days of his youth show him far more susceptible to the attractions of society; though even then arose the moments of reaction. Among his papers is the draft, or perhaps a copy, of a letter written by him to Gouverneur Kemble when Irving was at Richmond, in 1807, taking a minor part at the trial of Aaron Burr. It is a long letter, too long for full rehearsal here; but the following passage shows its tenor:

"For myself I find I am declining very much in popularity from having resolutely and manfully resisted sundry temptations and invita-

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## INTRODUCTION

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tions to tea parties—stews—balls and other infernal orgies which have from time to time been celebrated by the little enchantresses of this place. I tried my hand two or three times at an apology for my non attendance, but it would not do, my usual ill luck followed me; for once when I alleged the writing of letters, it was plainly proved that I was seen smoking a cigar and lolling in the porch of the Eagle, and another time when I plead a severe indisposition, I was pronounced guilty of having sat at a young lady's elbow the whole evening and listened to her piano—all which brought me into manifest disgrace and reduced me to great extremity—upon the which I forthwith summoned up my pride, girded up my loins, foreswore all apologies in future and declared that I should thenceforward consider an invitation as an insult,—since which time I have had but little to complain of on that score, and enjoy sovereign independence and a perfect command of my time and person."

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## INTRODUCTION

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Despite Irving's desire for that freedom from social obligations which the preceding lines lightly make evident, his participation in Aaron Burr's trial was merely that of the interested observer who was at the same time a student of law. The value of this episode comes, for lovers of Irving, from the realization that with Aaron Burr, as with Napoleon Bonaparte, Irving could not altogether suppress a feeling of sympathy for a man of genius overtaken by fate. He did not forget that they were the victims of little enemies, as well as of their own great faults.

The mention of Burr inevitably suggests the most costly of American duels; yet it took more than the killing of Hamilton (who lies buried in the street where Brevoort and Irving dwelt together) to bring an end to a custom that led to the death of Irving's friend Commodore Decatur. Duelling in America was yet to become as obsolete as that piracy on the high seas which was swept into the past by

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## INTRODUCTION

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the victories of Decatur and his fellows in our war with Algiers.

That history should repeat itself is, I fancy, merely its way of emphasizing the constancy of the human equation, the significance of recurrent forces; but when such repetitions come in a form punctuated by centuries one must surmise that it is an act of courtesy of one muse to another, history realizing how literature has a leaning towards the phrase "just one hundred years ago."—But indeed, is it not strange that just one hundred years ago the United States, alone of nations, was making a determined stand for the rights of all nations on the highways of the sea? And in that war with the piratical nations of the African coast was not alone Irving's Commodore Decatur—from Rector Street,—but also the "little tar" Jack Nicholson, one of the chums of Irving and Brevoort.

Returning to the letters to Brevoort, it is manifest that the success of the *Sketch Book*

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## INTRODUCTION

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(written, for the most part, at the Birmingham home, "the Redoubtable Castle Van Tromp," of his brother-in-law, Henry Van Wart) forms the great and fortunate break in Irving's career. With all his philosophy, the drudgery, and even more than this, the worry of mercantile affairs affected many of the letters written in 1815-1818 from Birmingham and Liverpool. But even in this period of business affairs we shall find, as in his description of the queer human conglomeration in the hotel at Buxton, nuggets of literary art aglow with golden humor.

Between 1820 and 1825 his epistles to Brevoort were penned, with the exception of two London letters, in the happy metropolis of France, which, many years earlier, he had first visited as a care-free youth. Apart from French people, Irving now had as Parisian companions sometimes the poet Rogers and that jolly lyricist Tom Moore; again, from America would come Gallatin, Randolph, Astor, and others, bringing news

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## INTRODUCTION

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of home; while his works were ever achieving more success. We find him just touching upon commercial affairs, in connection with an enterprise for navigating the Seine by steam; a business in which he took a share more on account of his brothers Peter and William than for himself. There are various references to drafts on Brevoort, which of course in those days he was able to make with full knowledge of immediate repayment when due. The only note of resentment during this period of his correspondence was in connection with the query as to the possibility of his renouncing America, which he had left in 1815, and to which he did not return for seventeen years. His indignant denial took the convincing form, that shall be found in his letter of March 10th, 1821, and which renders manifest how truly the artist and the man was endeavoring to serve his country

And here we pause a moment to emphasize

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## INTRODUCTION

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the entire validity and worthiness of Irving's argument. It is not alone the privilege but, it might well seem, the obligation of men of genius to follow their natural bent, yielding to their inclination in abstaining from political work, social movements and propaganda, and similar activities to which other serious and high-minded men may be devoting their energies. The artist and the author often make their contribution to human development of most lasting benefit by reason of their partial remoteness from the questions of the day. They move and have their being in that world of beauty and of ideas which is not bounded by the interests of any particular epoch, and their service, although imponderable in the scales of immediate social benefit, remain the lasting heritage of countless generations. The artist who, like Irving, is true to his own talent, is, in the final analysis, the fairest benefactor of mankind.

Irving's particular contribution in the field



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## INTRODUCTION

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of creative writing was the sketch-story. In one of his Paris letters to Brevoort, he shows his realization that this form of fiction was his own invention. "For my part," he writes, "I consider it merely as a frame on which to stretch my materials. It is the play of thought and sentiment, and language; the weaving in of characters lightly yet expressively delineated; the familiar and faithful exhibition of scenes in common life; and the half concealed vein of humour that is often playing through the whole—these are among what I aim at, and upon which I felicitate myself in proportion as I think I succeed."

Towards the end of his stay in Paris, Irving devoted considerable time to the study of Spanish, study which was to stand him in good stead during the next few years while he was engaged upon his *Life of Columbus*. His letters from Spain are among the most delightful in this correspondence, and lengthy documents indeed are those which he sent to

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## INTRODUCTION

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Brevoort from Madrid, Seville, and Valencia. His researches in Spanish history were based at first on the work of Navarrete, the noted Spanish historian, and this debt (which he fully acknowledged) led to some criticism after the publication of the *Life of Columbus*. But in the letters to Brevoort may be found Irving's refutation of every charge of plagiarism, and among Irving's private papers is an unpublished letter of Navarrete, showing that nothing had ever occurred to mar the cordial relations between the American and Spanish authors.

It was during the years 1827-1829 that the charm of old Spain wove its spell around Irving. The governor of the Alhambra had given him permission to live in a corner of the ancient Moorish palace, and his description of his residence there contains one of the most poetical passages in all his writings, a description with intermingling elements of beauty and of romance and the glamour of old days.

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## INTRODUCTION

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During this period, Irving became very friendly with the Russian diplomat Prince Dolgorouki, then an attaché of the Russian Legation at Madrid. After Irving returned to America in 1832, the Prince wrote him a letter which has never yet appeared in type. It is a long and charming letter concerning diplomacy and art; and it contains the following anecdote which must appeal to students of painting. "In visiting the Gallery at Amsterdam, whose chief ornament is a celebrated painting by Rembrandt, I found in one of the very last rooms of the Museum one of the most beautiful paintings of Murillo that I have seen since leaving Madrid. The Director of the Gallery had had it placed in the midst of a lot of bad copies of the Italian School, its frame touching the floor; and when I showed surprise that so great a master should receive so little regard, he answered that he thought ' 'twas enough honor for Murillo to find himself in the same room with a Van Dyck: ' there, indeed, being,

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## INTRODUCTION

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by chance, a sufficiently dubious portrait by that artist, hanging above the great master of the School of Seville."

The charms of Andalusia, and all the attractions of that Spain which revived for Irving scenes from *Don Quixote*, were left behind in 1829, when Irving accepted the position of First Secretary of Legation under his friend McLane, then Minister to the Court of St. James. The next five letters are from London, where Irving was looking forward to meeting Brevoort, who had come to Europe. The revolution of 1830 was now occupying the attention of Europe, and we find Irving's comments on this "grand though terrible drama." The change in the American administration which led to the appointment of Irving at the same time involved the withdrawal from diplomatic life of his friend Alexander H. Everett, who had been the American Minister to Madrid during Irving's stay in Spain, a position that Irving himself was to occupy in

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## INTRODUCTION

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later years. His letter to Everett has found its way into type, but Everett's reply has remained hitherto among the unpublished papers of Irving, and is here drawn upon in view of the literary and philosophic spirit which animates it, and which is also characteristic of Irving. After congratulating his young friend, Everett continues: "As regards myself, you are right in supposing that my recall has not greatly disturbed my philosophy; I have been for some time past soliciting permission to return on leave of absence without any intention of revisiting this place. My taste is rather for literary and scientific occupations than for politics and I feel a strong temptation to consider the recent change in my position and prospects as a signal for retreat to devote myself wholly in future to letters."

In September, 1831, Irving resigned from the Legation. The end of that month marked

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## INTRODUCTION

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his final meeting with Walter Scott who had been so loyal a friend since the early days when he had first come to know the genius of Irving through the copy of *Knickerbocker's History* which Brevoort had sent to the author of *Waverley*.

A few months later, Irving was at last homeward bound. He returned to America a famous man, who for the remainder of his life remained one of the most distinguished and best beloved citizens of the republic. His career during the following years, his beautiful quiet life with his brothers and sisters and their children at his home of Sunnyside in Irvington, and the progress of his writings, do not come directly within the scope of this Introduction. Brevoort, with whom, of course, his correspondence now came for a time to an end, was again a near neighbor. We find an interesting reference to him in connection with the great fire which devastated New York in 1835, in a letter which was

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## INTRODUCTION

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written on Christmas Day of that year by Irving to his brother Peter: "Poor Brevoort," he writes, "has lost about fifty thousand dollars, and feels a little sore at the loss, but I trust will soon get over it, as he has an ample fortune left." The only letter that Irving seems to have written to his friend during these years is the brief note in which he suggests that Brevoort should join him in his visit to their old friend Gouverneur Kemble, whither now we find Irving going accompanied by his niece, Sarah Paris. There is a boyish note in these lines, suggesting the high spirits of the days of their youth.

In 1842 Irving and Brevoort were again separated by the width of the sea. Daniel Webster, as Secretary of State under Tyler, invited Irving to accept an appointment as Minister to the Court of Madrid. "I assure you," writes the greatest of American orators to the first of American men of letters, "it

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## INTRODUCTION

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gives me much pleasure to have been instrumental in calling you to so distinguished a post in the public service. If a gentleman of more merit and higher qualifications had presented himself, great as is my personal regard for you, I should have yielded to higher considerations."—"Ah! This is a nomination everybody will concur in!" Henry Clay had exclaimed when hearing of it. "If the President would send us such names as this, we should never have any difficulty." Irving accepted, not without reluctance at the thought of leaving "dear little Sunnyside." He took with him as attaché of Legation J. Carson Brevoort, the son of his dear friend; and in the letter that Irving wrote to Brevoort from Paris not long after reaching Europe, he says: "I am delighted to have him with me; my heart warms toward him, not merely on his own account, but also on your own. He seems like a new link in our old friendship which commenced when we



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## INTRODUCTION

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were both about his age or even younger, and which I have always felt as something almost fraternal."

The final letter in this series to Brevoort is dated November 25th, 1843. It was written from Bordeaux during a two or three months' absence from Spain, a trip which Irving made in the search for health. So serious was his affliction that the *Life of Washington* and all his other literary labors were suspended. His income from his writings was on the wane, and we find him expressing the hope that "I may again find some bookseller to take a lease of my published works and thus, by hook and by crook, may be enabled to return home and spend some few years with my kindred and friends before I die."—It must indeed be a source of gratification to those publishers who are so appropriately issuing the present work, to recall that it was their father, George P. Putnam, who reestablished the vogue of Irving; with courage, faith, and sagacity re-

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## INTRODUCTION

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printing all former writings and bringing out new ones.

This last of the letters is one of those most worth reading. Touching upon literature, royalty, social affairs and diplomacy, it contains many paragraphs with sentiments worthy the remembrance. "In my diplomacy," we here find Irving saying, "I have depended more upon good intentions and frank and open conduct than upon any subtle management. I have an opinion that the old maxim *Honesty is the best policy* holds good in diplomacy." Here we have in a few lines the expression of American practice, it is to be hoped; and, certainly, of American ideals. With an amusing anecdote of "little Queen Victoria," the letter draws towards its end; and so it is this kind and gentle lady, a personage of our own times, who seems thus graciously to link us with the days of Irving.

Here, then, we leave this chain of letters which for more than thirty-five years bound

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## INTRODUCTION

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in loyal intimacy the old New Yorker, Henry Brevoort, and the old New Yorker who signs himself at the end of this correspondence with his friend:

“Ever most affectionately yours,  
WASHINGTON IRVING.”

*O courteous citizen of elder days,  
Gracious romance was thine, and kindly mirth.  
Full well it is thy genius to praise;  
But best, thy wisdom of goodwill on earth.*

GEORGE S. HELLMAN.

NEW YORK: June, 1915.

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**LETTERS OF WASHINGTON IRVING  
TO HENRY BREVOORT**

**VOL. I—1**

**I**



LETTERS OF WASHINGTON IRVING  
TO HENRY BREVOORT

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*Philadelphia, Oct. 23<sup>d</sup> 1807.*

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

I am so pressed for time that I have not been able to write to any of my friends in N York. I wish you would tell Mrs. Hoffman—James & Peter that I shall write to each of them as soon as I can find leisure, and do let me know how you are all coming on and what you are doing in N York. Is the little orator still faithful to his post? I am peculiarly anxious that he should persevere & succeed, and then he & his delectable Rib might love or hate one another as much as they pleased for aught I'd care.—I only chuckle to myself to think how the little man would be stumped, if he offered to read one of his dull pieces of wit,

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PHILADELPHIA, OCTOBER 23<sup>d</sup> 1807

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or sport one of his Johnsonian contradictions after matrimony.

I have been delayed in putting my work to press by some minute & curious facts which I found in a Mss. in the Phila<sup>d</sup> Library & which has obliged me to make alterations in the first vol. but tomorrow I begin—by God.

I wish you would immediately forward me the inscription on old P. Stuyvesant Tombstone—and get Jim as well as yourself to prepare some squibbs &c to attract attention to the work when it comes out.

I am my good fellow

Yours

W. I.

P.S. Ann & Charles are as loving and happy as two little robins in one nest.

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SKEENESBOROUGH, MAY 9<sup>th</sup> 1808

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*Skeenesborough, May 9<sup>th</sup> 1808.*

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

Here have I been embargoed by confounded contrary winds for five days—having arrived the day after you set sail—I feel extremely embarrassed how to proceed. The good folks at the line are so excessively strict that I dare not risk my silver across. I believe I shall sail for Burlington tomorrow if the wind favours & deposit my silver there—either getting gold in exchange or receipts from the cashier—which I am told I can get cash at par for, in Montreal from Merchants who wish to remit money to their agents in Vermont. I have about 9,000\$ with me—look about if you can secure me good Bills. I am afraid this will turn out but a lame business all round. I have heard of *Nuncles* getting through the trap—with the loss of *his tail*; and as for myself, I expect to rival honest Primrose's son Moses, in his great bargain of the green spectacles.

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SKEENESBOROUGH, MAY 9<sup>th</sup> 1808

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I entreat you not to leave Montreal until my arrival—we must return together. My Brother Peter is with me—and we are both at the house of Bully Rook, mine host of the *Garter*. We have nearly read through the library of the good Dame Quickly—who by the way is a great friend of yours. Enquire about, whether you can find any who will accept drafts on the Burlington Bank at par—remember me to our friends & believe me

Ever yours

W. I.

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NEW YORK, JUNE 11<sup>th</sup> 1808

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*New York, June 11<sup>th</sup> 1808.*

MY DEAR HARRY:—

McKenzie starts this afternoon and I snatch a moment from the crowd of avocations to scribble you a line if it is merely to let you know how much, how very much I long to see you. The fates, who I once for all curse for a set of perverse, ill-natured old maids—have most obstinately persisted in keeping us asunder during our travels, and I have no other method of baffling their malice, than to remain stock still in town until your return. I entreat you & believe me I do it most earnestly, and in the fullness of my heart, to come back as soon as your honest occupations will permit, for I never was more impatient to shake you by the hand, than I am at present. Our poor friend Mrs. R—breathed her last this morning. I am now writing at the house of Mr. H. which is a melancholy mansion indeed. What between one melancholy event & another, and my own



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NEW YORK, JUNE 11<sup>th</sup> 1808

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fickle spirits, I find myself sadly depressed, but I am certain your return would perfectly revive me. I got home the evening before last and found our friends much I believe as you left them. You know that Mary Fairlie is down at Rockaway. Louisa & Maria Moore have gone down to keep her company. Ann is fair & beautiful as ever & full of fascination. You are a prodigious favourite of hers & seem to have won all the epaulettes &c &c, in fact you are spoken of with a degree of affection by the whole family, which I assure you has delighted me; for I wish all my friends to be thoroughly yours.

I shall not pretend to give you much news in this letter for it is an even chance whether McKenzie meets with you or not—but shall close with again begging you to let me see you in N York as soon as possible.

I am my dear fellow

Truly yours

W. I.

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NEW YORK, JUNE 11<sup>th</sup> 1808

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P.S. Mr. H. sent a letter to me by you which you were to leave in Albany. I never received it & hope you will be careful to bring it with you.

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KINDERHOOK, MAY 11<sup>th</sup> 1809

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*Kinderhook, May 11<sup>th</sup> 1809.*

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

I wrote you a hasty letter a few days since, and as Mr. Van Ness is about visiting the city I will scrawl you a few more, since they will cost you no postage. I feel much heartier than when I left town, particularly within these two last days; and have been able to resume my pen this morning, but not with much spirit—I am in hopes however, that I shall brighten up as I proceed. My time here, though I pass most of it by myself, slips off very pleasantly—and I find so little want of amusement to while it away, that for two days I have scarcely been out of the house. You would be highly pleased with a visit here—the house is spacious and judiciously planned and the surrounding country affords a variety of agreeable scenery.

The only country acquaintance I have made, is a schoolmaster who teaches the neighbouring children—a pleasant, good na-

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KINDERHOOK, MAY 11<sup>th</sup> 1809

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tured fellow, with much native, unimproved shrewdness and considerable humour. As he is a kind of inmate at Van Ness's we have become very great friends and I have found much entertainment in his conversation.

Van Ness mentioned that he meant to invite you to return with him. If he does so, I wish you would accept his invitation. Perhaps the picture I have been giving of my situation may not be calculated to entice you from the city; for I own it has the features of dull monotony—but I assure you the hours move along here with a calmness and serenity, that, if I may judge of your feelings from my own, would be infinitely more gratifying than all the hurry and noisy mirth of more dissipated scenes.

If you should come up enquire of him whether he has looked at any of those things I left with him, and if he has done with any of them bring them with you. Should he leave

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KINDERHOOK, MAY 11<sup>th</sup> 1809

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town for any time, I wish he would seal them up and leave them with my mother.

I wish you would procure me a bottle of that oil you used for your hair—the nervous fever with which I have lately been troubled has occasioned mine to come out a little—and I would wish to try your prescription—let me have it by Mr. Van Ness.

Write me if there is any more news about the Orator, the red man or any other topic of conversation. Does Cooper go out to England? How does King Stephen make out? and all the other chit chat of the day.

I have just time to finish & fold up my letter. Remember me to my friends the Hayslops &c.

Yours most truly

W. I.

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KINDERHOOK, MAY 20<sup>th</sup> 1809

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*Kinderhook, May 20<sup>th</sup> 1809*

MY DEAR FELLOW:—

Mr. Van Ness mentions that you sent me a pacquet by the Steam boat but it has never come to hand. He says it contained a recent work called letters from the Mountain—but I am apprehensive that it contains some of my Mss. You cannot think how uneasy I feel—why did you not drop me a line in the post office at the same time to let me know a pacquet was coming—as to directing it to be left at Hudson, you might as well say *the bank of the river*—I know not where to look for it, or whether it has been sent ashore at Hudson or carried to Albany.

Do write me immediately on the receipt of this—if it is only a single line to put me out of suspense. If you have not forwarded any of the Mss. do not do so unless you or Peter K come up here. I would not have them sent by a chance conveyancer.

I hope Jim has nearly run through them—

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KINDERHOOK, MAY 20<sup>th</sup> 1809

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I fear he will be too minute & either be very long about it, or tire himself out before he has got half way. I have almost finished—and in the course of a week hope to be released from my pen. I shall then drive with all possible dispatch to get completely done with the business and once more liberty, when I shall take up a regular course of study for the summer.

I shall return in the course of a fortnight—though my good friend Van Ness had insisted upon my staying until September. I have promised if possible to return here—and I rather think this will be my summer's retreat. It is exactly the kind of place I have long pictured to myself as an enviable summer's seclusion.

I have received a long letter from my worthy friend Peter Kemble, to whom I feel more gratitude for this mark of affection, than I can easily express. I wish you had come up with Van Ness so as to return with me—you may

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KINDERHOOK, MAY 20<sup>th</sup> 1809

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yet take a trip here and accompany me down. If you come up & bring up the MSS. that are in Jim's hands—I will have occupation enough to keep me here some time longer. I wish you would do so. The country is heavenly—every thing is in bloom.

Farewell—I am writing at almost midnight and scarce know what I scrawl. Do not fail to write me word immediately about the paquet—& who you sent it in charge of. Write by the very first mail after you receive this, otherwise it will make a difference of two or three days. Remember me to all and believe me

Yours most truly

W. I.

P.S. I wish Jim to save a little of his attention & critical industry for the remainder which I have in hand. I have not been able to do it the justice I would wish from not being in full health & spirits—I have done little more than copy off from my original scrawls.



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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 22<sup>d</sup> 1810

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*New York, Sept. 22<sup>d</sup> 1810.*

MY DEAR FELLOW:—

I engaged to write you a letter to Albany and this is scribbled in haste to keep my promise & *save my supper*. I had hoped before this to have had you in New York, but a letter I have just seen from you to Hyslop informs me that you will not be here until some time next week.

We have received news that poor L'Herbert is taken and carried into Plymouth—this I am afraid will knock up your French speculations. I see by this morning's papers that honest Sindbad has arrived safe in port—I mean to visit him tomorrow if I am in town. I am so much pressed for time that I cannot enter into a narrative of all that has come to pass among our friends since your departure, though I believe the catalogue of events would by no means be voluminous.

I passed eight or ten days delightfully at the Captain's Castle in the Highlands. He

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 22<sup>d</sup> 1810

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lives in a royal bachelor style and is a true Lad of Kilkenny.

Charles & Ann are still here, but talk of leaving us tomorrow. Our Theatre has opened with as sorry a show of cattle as you could imagine we have known. Had Wood from Philadelphia to perform a few nights and he has acquitted himself admirably. I wish you had been here to get acquainted with him. He is a perfect gentleman in private life, and of the most amiable disposition and engaging manners. He has established a high reputation here.

Parker Hunt and the fair Clara, it is discovered were married in April last—at the house of your fair friend *Moshes*—I suppose of course you were in the feast. Old Jamey swears most horribly and so does his immaculate though ancient spinster of a Sister that the match shall be annulled, because Jamey was frightened into it by the handsome pursuer threatening to blow out the small

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 22<sup>d</sup> 1810

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matter of brains he had in his head. Harry Buckley endeavours to put on a bright face and laugh it off—but he cannot get further than a *ghastly grin*.

The knowing ones are in fine order excepting little Sue who has had a sad inflammation in her eyes as a judgment from heaven on her for taking a jaunt on Long Island with that King of Beasts Dr. Romaine and his Buckram spouse.

As I have but just two minutes left to walk half a mile to pay half an hour's visit to Ann & Charles I'll conclude by assurances of friendship and affection.

Yours ever  
W. IRVING.

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CITY OF WASHINGTON, JAN. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811

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*City of Washington, Jany. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I have been constantly intending to write to you, but you know the hurry and confusion of the life I at present lead, and the distraction of thought which it occasions, and which is totally hostile to letter writing. The letter however which you have been so good as to write me demands a return of some kind or another, so I answer it, partly through a sense of duty and partly in hopes of inducing you to write another. My Journey to Baltimore was terrible and sublime—as full of adventurous matter and direful peril as one of Walter Scott's pantomimic, melodramatic, romantic tales. I was three days on the road, and slept one night in a Log house. Yet somehow or another I lived through it all—and lived merrily into the bargain, for which I thank a large stock of good humour which I put up before my departure from N. York, as travelling stores to last me throughout my

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CITY OF WASHINGTON, JAN. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811

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expedition. In a word, I left home determined to be pleased with every thing, or if not pleased, to be amused, if I may be allowed the distinction, and I have hitherto kept to my determination. To beguile the ruggedness & tediousness of the road between Phil<sup>a</sup> & Baltimore I had an old acquaintance in the stage with me—Lieut. Gibbon of the Navy—whom I was well acquainted with in Richmond—& who is a true gentleman sailor & a very amiable pleasant fellow. He entertained me two whole days with a minute and agreeably related narration of the exploits of our little navy in the Mediterranean & particularly of the captivity of our officers in Tripoli—he having been one of the prisoners. I had a full and very entertaining account of all their misfortunes—plots—attempts at escape—pastimes, executions &c &c—with a very familiar picture of Tripoli and its inhabitants. All this was told with the simple frankness of a sailor & the liberal spirit of a gentleman. He

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CITY OF WASHINGTON, JAN. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811

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passed but one night in Baltimore but I have met him several times in company in Washington, where he is quite a favourite.

I remained two days in Baltimore where I was very well treated and was just getting into very agreeable Society when the desire to get to Washington induced me to set off abruptly—deferring all enjoyment of Baltimore until my return. While there I dined with honest Coale—(whose sister, by the bye, verifies the assertion of Mrs. Hopkinson, that she is handsomer than her picture). At his table I found Jarvis, who is in great vogue in Baltimore—painting all the people of note & fashion, and universally passing for a great wit, a fellow of infinite jest;—in short—“*the agreeable rattle.*” I am likewise waited on by Mr. Tezier, the French gentleman who has translated my history of N. Y. He is a very pleasant, gentlemanly fellow, and we were very civil to each other as you may suppose. He tells me he has sent his translation to

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CITY OF WASHINGTON, JAN. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811

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Paris, where I suspect they will understand & relish it about as much as they would a Scotch haggis & a singed sheep's head.

The ride from Baltimore to Washington was still worse than the former one—but I had two or three odd geniuses for fellow passengers & made out to amuse myself very well. I arrived at the Inn about dusk and, understanding that Mrs. Madison was to have her levee or drawing room that very evening, I swore by all my gods, I would be there. But how? was the question. I had got away down into Georgetown, & the persons to whom my letters of introduction were directed lived all upon Capitol Hill about three miles off—while the President's house was exactly half way. Here was a nonplus, enough to startle any man of less enterprising spirit—but I had sworn to be there—and I determined to keep my oath, & like Caleb Quotem, to “have a place at the Review.” So I mounted with a stout heart to my room,

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CITY OF WASHINGTON, JAN. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811

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resolved to put on my pease blossoms & silk stockings, gird up my loins—sally forth on my expedition & like a vagabond Knight errant, trust to Providence for success and whole bones. Just as I descended from my attic chamber, full of this valorous spirit, I was met by my landlord, with whom, & the head waiter by the bye, I had held a private cabinet counsel on the subject. Bully Rook informed me that there was a party of gentlemen just going from the house, one of whom, Mr. Fontaine Maury of N. York, had offered his services to introduce me to “the Sublime porte.” I cut one of my best opera flourishes, skipped into the dressing room, popped my head into the hands of a sanguinary Jacobinical barber, who carried havoc and desolation into the lower regions of my face, mowed down all the beard on one of my cheeks and laid the other in blood, like a conquered province—and thus like a second Banquo, with “twenty mortal murders on my head,” in a few



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CITY OF WASHINGTON, JAN. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811

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minutes I emerged from dirt & darkness into the blazing splendour of Mrs. Madison's Drawing room. Here I was most graciously received—found a crowded collection of great and little men, of ugly old women, and beautiful young ones—and in ten minutes was hand and glove with half the people in the assemblage. Mrs. Madison is a fine, portly, buxom dame—who has a smile & pleasant word for every body. Her sisters, Mrs. Cutts & Mrs. Washington are like the two Merry Wives of Windsor—but as to Jemmy Madison—ah! poor Jemmy! he is but a withered little apple-John. But of this no more—perish the thought that would militate against sacred things—Mortals avaunt! touch not the lord's anointed!

Since that memorable evening I have been in a constant round of banquetting, revelling, and dancing—the Congress has been sitting with closed doors, so that I have not seen much of the wisdom of the Nation, but I have

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CITY OF WASHINGTON, JAN. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811

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had enough matter for observation & entertainment to last me a handful of months. I only want a chosen fellow like yourself to help me wonder, admire, and laugh—as it is I must endeavour to do these things as well as I can by myself.

I am delightfully moored, “head & stern” in the family of John P. Van Ness—Brother of William P. He is an old friend of mine & insisted on my coming to his house the morning after my arrival. The family is very agreeable—Mrs. Van Ness is a pretty & pleasant little woman, & quite gay—then there are two pretty girls likewise—one a Miss Smith, *clean* from Long Island, her father being Member of Congress; she is a fine blooming country lass, and a great Belle here—you see I am in clover—happy dog! clever Jacob! & all that.

The other evening at the City Assembly I was suddenly introduced to my cousin the congressman from Scaghticoke—and we forth-

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CITY OF WASHINGTON, JAN. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811

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with became two most loving friends. He is a goodhumoured fellow & with all a very decent country member. He was so overjoyed at the happy coincident of our family compact, that he begged to introduce me to his friend M<sup>r</sup> Simmons. This is a son of old Simmons of N. York of corpulent memory. By dint of steady attention to business—an honest character & a faithful fagging at the heels of Congress he has risen to some post of considerable emolument & respectability. Honest Simmons shook me heartily by the hand—professed himself always happy to see any body that came from New York—somehow or another it was *nattural* to him—being the place where he was *first* born.

Mat Davis is here, and “my brother George” into the bargain. Mat is endeavouring to obtain a deposit in the Mechanics Bank in case the U. S. Bank does not obtain a charter. Mat is as deep as usual—shakes his head and winks through his spectacles at everybody he

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CITY OF WASHINGTON, JAN. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811

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meets. He swore to me the other day—that he had not told anybody what his opinion was whether the Bank *ought* to have a charter or not—nobody in Washington knew what his opinion was—not one—nobody—he defied any one to say what it was—“anybody—damn the one—no sir—nobody knows,”—and if he had added nobody cares I believe honest Mat would have been exactly in the right. Then there’s his Brother George—“damn that fellow—knows eight or nine languages—yes, sir,—nine languages—Arabic—Spanish—Greek—Ital—and there’s his wife—she & Mrs. Madison are always together—Mrs. Madison has taken a great fancy to her little daughter—only think sir, that little child is only six years old and talks the Italian like a book, by God—little devil learnt it all from an Italian servant—damned clever fellow—lived with my Brother George ten years—George says he would not part with him for all Tripoli,” &c, &c, &c.

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CITY OF WASHINGTON, JAN. 13<sup>th</sup> 1811

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I wish you would let me hear from you again. I shall remain some days yet at this place & when I leave my letters will be taken care of by Van Ness.

I received a letter from Mrs. Hoffman the day before yesterday. I would have answered it, but have not time—this letter will do for her as well as yourself. It is now almost one o'clock at night—I must to bed—remember me to all the lads & lassies—Gertrude, Miss Wilkes and the Bonny lasses in Greenwich street, whose fair hands I kiss.

I am my dear fellow

Yours ever

W. I.

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WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 7<sup>th</sup> 1811

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*Washington, Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> 1811.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I am ashamed at not having answered your letter before, but indeed I am too much occupied & indeed distracted here by the multiplicity of objects before me, to write with any degree of coherency.

I wish with all my heart you had come on with me, for my time has passed delightfully. I have become acquainted with almost everybody here, and find the most complete medley of character I ever mingled amongst. As I do not suffer party feelings to bias my mind I have associated with both parties—and have found worthy and intelligent men in both—with honest hearts, enlightened minds, generous feelings and bitter prejudices. A free communication of this kind tends more than anything else to divest a man's mind of party bigotry; to make him regardless of those jaundiced representations of persons & things which he is too apt to have held up to him by

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WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 7<sup>th</sup> 1811

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party writers, and to beget in him that candid, tolerant, good natured habit of thinking, which I think every man that values his own comfort and utility should strive to cultivate.

You would be amused were you to arrive here just now—to see the odd & heterogeneous circle of acquaintance I have formed. One day I am dining with a knot of honest, furious Federalists, who are damning all their opponents as a set of consummate scoundrels, panders of Bonaparte, &c &c. The next day I dine perhaps with some of the very men I have heard thus anathematized, and find them equally honest, warm, & indignant—and if I take their word for it, I had been dining the day before with some of the greatest knaves in the nation, men absolutely paid & suborned by the British government.

Among my great cronies is General Turreau—who, notwithstanding he is represented abroad as a perfect sanguinary ferocious bloodhound, I have found an exceeding pleasant

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WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 7<sup>th</sup> 1811

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jocose companion, and a man of shrewdness, information & taste. Latrobe (who is excessively abused here as an extravagant spendthrift of the public money, &c) is very civil to me. I have been to two or three entertainments at his house, & dine there today with a choice party of intelligent & agreeable men.

To shew you the mode of life I lead, I give you my engagements for this week. On Monday I dined with the mess of Officers at the Barracks—in the evening a Ball at Van Ness's. On Tuesday with my cousin Knickerbocker & several merry Federalists. On Wednesday I dined with General Turreau who had a very pleasant party of Frenchmen & democrats—in the evening at Mrs. Madison's levee, which was brilliant and crowded with interesting men & fine women. On Thursday a dinner at Latrobe's. On Friday a dinner at the Secretary of the Navy's, and in the evening a ball at the Mayor's. Saturday as yet is unengaged—at all these parties you meet with



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WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 7<sup>th</sup> 1811

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so many intelligent people, that your mind is continually & delightfully exercised.

The Supreme Court has likewise within a day or two brought a crowd of new strangers to the city. Jo. Ingersoll, Clement Biddle, Clymer, Goodloe Harper & several others have arrived—and one of your old flames Miss Keator, with whom Ingersoll is so much in love, as report says. There you see, my good fellow, how much you lost by turning back. This place would suit you to a fraction, as you could find company suitable to every varying mood of mind—and men capable of conversing and giving you information on any subject you wish to be informed. I may compare a place like this to a huge library, where a man may turn to any department of knowledge he pleases, and find an author at hand into which he may dip until his curiosity is satisfied.

What are you all doing at N York? I have not received a letter from there in an age. Do give me all the little chit chat of the town,

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WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 7<sup>th</sup> 1811

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and I give you leave to pen it as slovenly as you please—I send you this letter as a proof how carefully a man may write to his friends. I have written to my brothers repeatedly, but have received no answers. I am tired of this kind of correspondence where the writing is all on my side & I wish you would tell them so. I am rejoiced to hear you have shifted your quarters, and I make no doubt that you will be happier by the change. How do the Wilkeses? I am truly grieved to hear that my good friend Mr. Wilkes has been one of the sufferers in these hard times. How do the knowing ones? Their brave McPherson (*the interesting young man* who wore regimentals, played on the flute & wrote bad poetry) is here as evidence in the case of Wilkinson. I hope you visit them and do not suffer them to feel abandoned.

How does Gertrude—Peter, Billy Taylor—Gilpin—old Konkapot curl? The King of Clouts &c &c &c wrote me three lines con-

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WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 7<sup>th</sup> 1811

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cerning each of them. I charge you—had you but seen how eagerly I devoured your last letter—how I read it over & over & chuckled & laughed over it—I am sure you would have sat down immediately & wrote me another. I find by the papers & various other ways, that a new council is formed & the feds are all to be swung off at Tyburn Hill. Boss & the Mayor, it is said, are very contrite & sue for mercy—but in vain—“they die at sun rise.”

Has Boss taken his flight to Philadelphia from the top of a steeple? As to Gill, he is like a little fat dunghill cock, that can't fly across the water—the Hudson I fear will be impassable to him this winter.

How are you likely to make out in respect to the man that failed? I hope you feel yourself safe among the breakers. I understand there are two new Performers arrived—what kind of animals are they? Write to me immediately I beg of you. Give my love to Mrs.

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WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 7<sup>th</sup> 1811

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Hoffman and the Kembles & all my other friends—not forgetting the lads. Tell my brothers that when I receive an answer to any one of the letters I have written, I will begin to write again—but if I do before damme.

God bless you my dear fellow

Yours ever

W. I.

P.S. Your opinion of Walsh's review meets mine exactly. I am much disappointed in it, on a fair reading I even think his letters concerning France & England much tinctured with prejudice—the whole however shows great literary power.

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WASHINGTON, MARCH 5<sup>th</sup> 1811

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*Washington, March 5<sup>th</sup> 1811.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

Your letter sometime since concerning the modern feast of the centaurs and Lapithæ was truly heroic & historical, and I defy Dan Homer himself to present a more hideous battle than that of the puissant "King of Clouts." I received a letter yesterday from Peter the great who informed me of your recent trip to Phil<sup>a</sup>. I wonder much that you did not intimate something to me of such a movement, we might have calculated so as to meet there.

I shall leave this city the day after tomorrow. I should have gone tomorrow but the stage books were full. You cannot imagine how forlorn this desert city appears to me, now the great tide of casual population has rolled away. The three or four last days have been quite melancholy. Having formed a great number of intimate and agreeable acquaintances, I have been continually taking

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WASHINGTON, MARCH 5<sup>th</sup> 1811

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leave of persons for whom I had contracted a regard, and who are dispersing to various parts of this immense country, without much chance of our ever meeting one another again. I think nothing would tempt me to remain again in Washington until the breaking up of Congress; unless I might start off with the first of the tide. I have been detained by business at the comptroller's office, which after all has terminated unprofitably. I now begin to feel extremely anxious to be once more at home, and do not think I shall stop long by the way. I must, however, reconnoitre a little on our old seat of war at Philadelphia and at least find out what you have been about in your late secret expedition to those parts.

If you have not settled yourself permanently in lodgings at Mrs. Rumseys, I think you had better look out for a situation where the company will be more congenial to your taste & habits. As far as I recollect Mrs. R's

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WASHINGTON, MARCH 5<sup>th</sup> 1811

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boarders are more to be admired for their talents at eating & drinking than anything else—as you are a man of very immovable disposition when you once locate yourself, it behooves you to be a little choice of the spot where you determine to take root.

I beg you “as you are friend, scholar & soldier” to give me this poor request, that you would write to me immediately, a full and satisfactory letter, touching affairs in New York, and also touching your late expedition to Phil<sup>a</sup>, in which expedition I am told you played Squire to the ex-Recorder. Do not fail to write, my good lad, for you cannot conceive how earnestly I covet another letter from you—direct to the care of Charles & Nichols. And let me find the letter at Phil<sup>a</sup> when I arrive there. Let me know how you come on with the lads. Peter has hinted that he did not think the majestic Hen would ever find favour in your eyes, but Peter is a varlet and I cannot give my faith to his

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WASHINGTON, MARCH 5<sup>th</sup> 1811

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assertion. No—no—my dear Brevoort—the mind—the mind! is what you must consult—and then thank heaven the diverse Hen was superior to “common ordinary mortals”—as my favourite poet says.

I am writing most execrably flat—and to tell the truth am in a deplorable humdrum mood this morning—but *allow*—a few cracks of the whip & shifts of the wheel will change the scene—and a few more will bring me once more among my cronies.

Give my love to all at Mrs. Hoffman's, the Kembles &c &c &c and so God Bless you all.

W. IRVING.

P.S. About the time you receive this, I expect “my cousin” Knickerbocker will arrive in N. Y. I wish you would call at the City Hotel & look for him, and give him some attention among you; he is a right honest, sound hearted pleasant fellow.



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PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 16<sup>th</sup> 1811

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*Philadelphia, March 16<sup>th</sup> 1811.*

MY DEAR FELLOW:—

I arrived in this city the day before yesterday, and was delighted to find a letter from you, waiting for me on Charles' mantel-piece. I thank you for this mark of attention, & for the budget of amusing and interesting news you have furnished me with. I stopped but four days at Baltimore on my return; one of which I was confined at home by indisposition. The people of Baltimore are exceedingly social and very hospitable to strangers; and I saw that if I let myself once get into the stream, I should not be able to get out again under a fortnight at least; so being resolved to push homewards as expeditiously as was reasonably possible, I resisted the world, the flesh, and the devil at Baltimore; and after three days & nights' stout carousal, and a fourth's sickness, sorrow, and repentance, I hurried off from that sensual city. By the bye, that little "Hydra and chimera dire," Jarvis,

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PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 16<sup>th</sup> 1811

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is in prodigious great circulation at Baltimore. The gentlemen have all voted him a rare wag and most brilliant wit; and the ladies pronounce him one of the queerest, ugliest, most agreeable little creatures in the world. The consequence is that there is not a ball, tea-party, concert, supper, or any other private regale, but that Jarvis is the most conspicuous personage; and as to a dinner, they can no more do without him, than they could without Friar John at the roystering revels of the renowned Pantagruel. He is overwhelmed with business and pleasure, his pictures admired and extolled to the skies, and his jokes industriously repeated and laughed at. . . .

Jack Randolph was at Baltimore for a day or two after my arrival. He sat to Jarvis for a likeness for one of the Ridgeley's, and consented that I should have a copy. I am in hopes of receiving it before I leave Philadelphia, and of bringing it home with me. . . .

I was out visiting with Ann yesterday, and

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PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 16<sup>th</sup> 1811

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met that little assemblage of smiles and fascinations, Mary Jackson. She was bounding with youth, health and innocence, and good humor. She had a pretty straw hat tied under her chin with a pink ribbon, and looked like some little woodland nymph, just lured out by spring and fine weather. God bless her light heart, & grant that it may never know care or sorrow! it's enough to cure spleen and melancholy only to look at her.

Your familiar pictures of home make me extremely desirous again to be there. It will be impossible, however, to get away from the kind attentions of our friends in this city, until some time next week, perhaps towards the latter end, when I shall once more return to sober life, satisfied with having secured three months of sunshine in this valley of shadows and darkness.

I rejoice to hear of the approaching nuptials of our redoubtable Highland chieftain, and hope you are preparing a grand Epithalamium

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PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 16<sup>th</sup> 1811

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for the joyful occasion. Remember me affectionately to the Hoffmans, Kembles, etc.

Yours ever

W. IRVING.

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PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 18<sup>th</sup> 1811

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*Phil: March 18<sup>th</sup> 1811.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I write this letter merely to introduce to you Mr. Wm. Rogers of Rhode Island; who will be a fellow lodger of yours. I have seen considerable of him at Washington, Baltimore &c and am much pleased with him. Make him acquainted with Peter, Jim &c—and at Mrs. Hoffmans, the Lads or wherever you may be visiting—I am sure you will be pleased with him—ask him to ride Amy Darden's horse for you a little—I shall be with you in a few days, and then we will look out for Gouv and prepare for the captain's Hymeneals.

Yours ever  
W. I.

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PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 11<sup>th</sup> 1811

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*Phil: April 11<sup>th</sup> 1811.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I have neglected answering your letter from an expectation that I should have been home before this; but I have suffered day after day to slip by, and here I still am, in much the same mood as you are when in bed of a fine genial morning endeavouring to prolong the indolent enjoyment, to indulge in another doze, and renew those delicious half waking dreams that give one an idea of a Mussulman's paradise. I have for a few months past led such a pleasant life, that I almost shrink from awakening from it into the commonplace round of regular existence—"but this eternal blazon must not be" (Shakespeare) so in two or three days I'll gird up my loins, take staff in hand and return to the land of my fathers. To tell the truth I have been induced to stay a day or two longer than I otherwise would have done, to have the gratification of seeing Cooke in Kitley & Lear;

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PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 11<sup>th</sup> 1811

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the first he plays to night, the other on Wednesday. The old fellow is in great repute here, and draws excellent houses. I stopped in accidentally at the theatre a few evenings since, when he was playing Macbeth; not expecting to receive any pleasure, for you recollect he performed it very indifferently in New York. I entered just at the time when he was meditating the murder, and I remained to the end of the play in a state of admiration and delight. The old boy absolutely outdid himself—his dagger scene, his entrance to Duncan's chamber & his horror after the commission of the deed completed a dramatic action that I shall never forget as long as I live—it was sublime. I place the performance of that evening among the highest pieces of acting I have ever witnessed—you know I had before considered Cooper as much superiour to him in Macbeth, but on this occasion the character made more impression on me than when played by Cooper or even

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PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 11<sup>th</sup> 1811

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Kemble. The more I see of Cooke the more I admire his style of acting—he is very unequal, from his irregular habits and nervous affections—for when he is in proper mood, there is a truth and of course a simplicity in his performances that throws all rant, stage trick & stage effect completely in the background. Were he to remain here a sufficient time for the public to perceive & dwell upon his merits and the true character of his playing, he would produce a new taste in acting. One of his best performances may be compared to a masterpiece of ancient statuary; where you have the human figure destitute of idle ornament, depending upon the truth of Anatomical proportion and arrangement, the accuracy of character and gracefulness of composition—in short a simple display of nature. Such a production requires the eye of taste & knowledge to perceive its eminent excellences; whereas a vulgar spectator will turn from it to be enraptured with some



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PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 11<sup>th</sup> 1811

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bungling workmanship, loaded with finery & drapery, and all the garish ornaments in which unskillfulness takes refuge.

Sully has finished a very fine and careful portrait of Cooke—and has begun a full length picture of him in the character of Richard. This he is to receive 300\$ for from the gentlemen of Phil<sup>a</sup> who opened a subscription for the purpose, which was filled up in an hour. The picture is to be placed in the Academy of Arts.

I rode out yesterday to your country seat in the neighbourhood of this city. It is in a state of great neglect & very much out of order—I would advise you to see it without delay.

Walsh's 2d number will be out in two or three days; I have seen it, but have not had time to read more than a few pages of a masterly review of Hamilton's works. I think the number will do him great credit.

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PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 11<sup>th</sup> 1811

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Give my love to all who love me and  
remember me kindly to the rest.

Yours truly

W. I.

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NEW YORK, AUGUST [?] 1811

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*New York, August [?] 1811.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

Dennis has come home laden with anecdotes of your expedition, and yourself. According to his account you landed safely on your head at Benny Cornwalls at seven in the evening & flourished your heels in the air for joy. He relates long conversations which he has had with you about the fair Julia besides several tender things which you said in your sleep; from all that I can learn, you must have rehearsed some of the capers that the renowned hero of LaMancha cut in the mountains, and sent Dennis as your discreet & faithful Squire, to report them to Dulcinea. Dennis Sampayo (a Portuguese) has fairly knocked March's Brains out with a Quotation; and turned our house perfectly up side down with laughter at his good speeches. I question whether the sage Panza ever occasioned more jollity in the Duke's household than Dennis did this afternoon among the gentle-

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NEW YORK, AUGUST [?] 1811

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men of the Supper Room. Poor Mrs. Bradish was nearly annihilated by the shouts of able bodied laughter from that fat Varlet March. Dennis informs us that he and you keep a journal which is so exquisitely humourous that Mrs. Cooper on only looking at the first word fell into a fit of laughing that lasted half an hour. We look forward with vast expectations to the perusal of this manuscript.

We all sent an Invitation in form to the Commodore & his lady to dine with us this afternoon but they declined on account of the heat of the day & invited us to tea & gin in the evening. We went over there in full force & passed a very pleasant evening. They dine with us tomorrow.

Monday Morning. I have laid out your spy glass, boots, chessmen &c. & had thoughts of sending all the other nicknacks I could find in your draws; but had thought it best to reserve the rest until you have tired yourself with these. The flute is not in the draw; for

which I am very glad—I do not think it would be an innocent amusement for you; as no man has a right to entertain himself at the expense of others. Dennis is full of business. He has to bustle out to your sisters—then to Mrs. Cooper then home & then the Lord knows where—it is a proud day for Dennis.

He mentioned as a great mark of Mrs. Cooper's politeness that she told him on their ride up, "Dennis don't be so bashful or constrained, if you feel sleepy take a nap whenever you please." We all assured him that such vast indulgence could only be in consequence of his having made himself wonderfully agreeable. I beg if you make any stay you would contrive to dispatch Dennis up to town from time to time to report progress; he has given the household a good month's laughter in the course of a hand full of hours. Don't omit to keep him at his studies of Shakespeare—he hints that Cooper begins to be a little jealous of his dramatic powers.

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NEW YORK, AUGUST [?] 1811

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I should like to pay Rockaway a visit this week, but I have allowed the little major to take a holiday & go to the country with his wife & little Trudgens & must play merchant for a few days.

My horse is doing well & according to Patrick's account eats his oats like a Gentleman.

Yours truly

W. I.

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NEW YORK, MARCH 17<sup>th</sup> 1812

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*New York, March 17<sup>th</sup> 1812.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I write this letter in haste, merely to apprise you of the development of Henry's real character and schemes, which have come to light since your departure. Perhaps he may have told his own story to you, *in his own way*, but from the full disclosures he has made to our Government, & which have been published, there is but one opinion here, which is, that Henry is an unprincipled and dangerous character. By his own account he has been prowling about this country as a British spy, & was employed by Mr. Craig in 1809 to visit the Eastern States, ascertain the state of politics, and if there was any disposition to rise in opposition to the General Gov<sup>t</sup> in case of a continuance of the Embargo; and if so, to offer the assistance of the British. This righteous mission was rendered unne-

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NEW YORK, MARCH 17<sup>th</sup> 1812

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cessary by the arrangement of Erskine. Henry has been disappointed in his hopes of recompense from the British Ministry, and partly out of revenge, and partly as it is said, on conditions of a large *douceur* & assurance of personal protection, has revealed the whole affair to our Government. I do not pretend to enter into the particulars of the transaction, you will doubtless hear it at large from other quarters. I only write in haste and anxiety, to charge you at once to break off from this dangerous man. How far his true history may yet be known, or how far he may have completed the desperate game he is evidently playing—it is impossible even to conjecture; but he is evidently a man far gone in the dark paths of deception and perfidy, and now that the mask is pulled off, may become bold faced and unhesitating in his enterprises.

I have been to all the editors, and prevented your name from being mentioned as fellow



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NEW YORK, MARCH 17<sup>th</sup> 1812

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passenger &c &c. Zachy Lewis had already mentioned you as one of the bearers of dispatches and Lang was laying his finger beside his nose, and knowingly inserting the initial of your name. This, however, was before Henry's affair was known. Since then, though the papers have been full of him & his mysterious departure, they have faithfully kept their words and not mentioned you. I feel extremely for the pain that this discovery will give you, for it is always a horrible shock to the heart to find we have been placing confidence and friendship in a deceitful & worthless character.

I have not been very well since your departure, and am completely out of Spirits, I do miss you terribly. I dined yesterday with a small party at Mrs. Renwicks and was at a tea party in the evening, and yet passed one of the heaviest days I have toiled through this long time.

Your commission has arrived from the

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NEW YORK, MARCH 17<sup>th</sup> 1812

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Governor and I will forward it to you by one  
of the present opportunities.

Your family are all well.

God Bless you my dear fellow.

Yours ever

W. I.

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NEW YORK, MARCH 29<sup>th</sup> 1812

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*New York, March 29<sup>th</sup> 1812.*

*(Excerpt from a missing letter of Irving to  
Brevoort).*

I have been so much occupied of late, partly by a severe indisposition of my good old mother (who has, however, recovered), and partly by my History, that I have not had time to write you a letter worth reading. I will atone for it hereafter. I have concluded my bargain with Inskeep and am about publishing. I receive 1,200\$ at six months for an edition of 1,500 copies. He takes all the expense of printing, etc., on himself.

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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*New York, July 8<sup>th</sup> 1812.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

The unsettled state of the times, and the uncertainties of your movements almost discourage me from writing to you, lest my letter should never come to hand—which, considering the great aversion I have to letter writing and the great trouble it costs me to manufacture an epistle, would be a vast deal of labour thrown away. But I will now draw my bow at random and trust to providence that my shot may reach you.

I am at present rustivating at a little snug retreat about six miles and half from town, on one of the hills just opposite Hellgate, and within a stone's throw of William Paulding's country seat. I am very pleasantly lodged in a French family, with a wood around me and a beautiful peep at the sound. Here I have settled myself for the summer & part of the fall to read, and, if it please heaven and the muse, to write. I have a very pleasant

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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neighbourhood—the Rhinelanders & Gracies living within ten minutes walk of me. I intend, however, in the course of three or four weeks, to voyage up the Hudson and see the fair nymphs of the Ferry House. Those exquisite *creatures* left town about a fortnight since, and took Miss Dallas with them. She had been about three weeks in N York, and had made great havoc round her. The heir apparent, that liquorish young rogue, having just crawled out of the powthering tub, and being well primed with Mercury—was among the first to feel the force of her charms; and followed faithfully in her train to the very last—not without suffering greatly from sundry long walks of hot days, which put him back very much in his complaint. The very day they left town he departed for the Highlands, where he and the Captain are two to two, drinking Madera, discussing politics and morals, and both disputing very positively on the same side of the question.

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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As to the Captain he has taken me in for a coat, as I see no hopes of an increase to his family, and my bet with John King will fall due next spring. I have no chance for some months at least as the Captain is so down & out with war, that I do not believe he has animal spirits enough to go through the necessary operations.

I am extremely anxious to hear how you conducted in respect to Henry. I was very fearful that he might be able by some plausible story told in his plausible manner, to glaze over his conduct and interest your sympathy in his favour. In the United States there is but one sentiment respecting him; that of the most thorough contempt. He is regarded as an unprincipled adventurer, with shewy but superficial talents and more cunning than wisdom. I hope the letters I wrote to you had their proper effect in detaching you from him entirely and immediately.

I have not seen your parents for some time

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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past. The distance I live from town makes it inconvenient for me to call there, particularly as I do not keep a horse, and have to depend upon chance conveyances to the city. I saw Margaret lately at Mrs. Renwick's. She informs me that Miss John has returned from Canada, having, according to David Ogden's account, learnt all that it was possible for mortal man to learn in his situation. I mean to call in the course of a day or two and see how the young gentleman talks and looks after his travels.

The marriage has at last taken place between Mary F[airlie] and Cooper. They were married at his new house. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. F. were present, nor any one excepting King Stephen and his spouse. After the ceremony was performed Cooper attended her home and left her—and two or three days later they set off to Baltimore. The old Major was worried into a kind of half consent. That is to say, if the girl could not be happy without

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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it, why, he supposed it must take place. Cooper has been applying for a Lieut. Colonelcy or a Majority in the army; but I believe he's not succeeded. I was told yesterday that they had returned home again. Such is the end of a dismal courtship and the commencement I fear of an unhappy union.

I hinted in the former part of my letter that the heir apparent had not been in the *powthering* tub; but I did not consider that this misfortune had happened to him since your departure. I don't know but that part of the sin lies at your door, for I believe it was from one of your virgins that he received the blessing. I was for some time at a loss what to make of the little man's manoeuvres. He would have a large tub of hot water brought into his room and then shut himself up for an hour with his man Torey, as if he was intent upon some informal initiations. I happened to enter his room abruptly one morning, and caught him *in quærpo* in the middle of this



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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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narrative up to his chin in hot water. I immediately concluded Peter must be suffering under a fit of the Hypo.—fancying himself a green turtle keeping up for a corporation feast, and that I was an Alderman come to inspect his condition. I expected every moment to see him dive to the bottom of his kraal. He has had a very long siege of it, but is now almost thoroughly recovered. He might have been well long since; but the little bellipotent knave cannot help toying occasionally with his bottle.

We had the magnaminous little Dr. Earle here some short time since; and determined to shew him the glories of our Island. To which end we embarked six of us in a coach, like so many jolly captains of vessels just landed, and took a day's journey round the Island. We dined at Manhattanville, and passed one of the merriest days I have spent for a long while. Indeed we have had three or four warm days work of late, that reminded me

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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very much of old times. The fourth of June we dined at Captain Philips and all got very much convived by wine & wassel, what between the wine and the song of Rule Britannia the captain got into a complete extacy—from thence we adjourned to Battins—and finished the evening by Jim's singing under the fair Julia's window, an old song travestied and most horribly out of tune.

A few days after Gen. Peter George Dallas of Phil<sup>a</sup> & myself dined on board the President with the officers in the ward room. We had a most convivial time, but sat so late that we could not go on shore that night—and the next day we were kept on board by a perfect storm of wind & rain until evening. I believe the ward room wont forget the rouse we gave it for some time to come. The frigate is in excellent order. The officers are a set of very fine gallant young fellows, and I have no doubt if a proper opportunity presents will

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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acquit themselves handsomely. But I look upon their fate as desperate, in a war with England.

The little Taylor has been here and passed some time since your departure. She is a delightful little creature, but alas, my dear Hal, she has not the *pewter*, as the sage Peter says. As to beauty, what is it "but a flower!" Handsome is that handsome has,—is the modern maxim. Therefore, little Taylor, "though thy little finger be armed in a thimble," yet will I set thee at defiance. In a word, she is like an ortolan, too rare and costly a dainty for a poor man to afford, but were I a nabob, 'fore George, ortolans should be my only food.

As I rode into town the other day, I had nearly ran down the fair Maria M——re. I immediately thought of your sudden admiration for her, which seemed to spring up rather late in the season, like strawberries in the fall —when every other swain's passion had died

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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a natural & lingering death. The fair Maria (for almighty truth will out) begins in my eyes to look, as that venerable Frenchman Todd would say—D——d stringy. She has been acting very much the part of the dog in the manger—she cannot enjoy her own chastity but seems unwilling to let anybody else do it. There certainly is a selfish pleasure in possessing a thing which is exclusively our own and which we see everybody around us coveting. And this may be the reason why we sometimes behold very beautiful women maintaining resolute possession of their charms—and what makes me think this must be the reason is that in proportion as these women grow old, and the world ceases to long after their treasures, they seem the most ready to part with them, until they at length seem ready to sacrifice them to the first bidder, and even to importune you to take them off their hands. This however I hope and believe will never be the case with the fair Maria, who, thanks to her

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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cool temperament can still pass on "in maiden meditation, fancy free."

I forgot to mention that I received your letter just after your arrival in Paris, and giving an account of your journey thither. I hope you may have found your other excursions in France equally agreeable. This war completely shuts up all my prospects of visiting Europe for some time to come; though I must confess I am so well pleased with home that I have no great desire at present to leave it. Travelling is a convenient alternative to resort to, when we begin to grow sated with objects around us, and require to be stimulated by novelty and variety. I always keep it in view as a kind of succedaneum for matrimony, and promise myself, in case I am not fortunate enough to get happily married to console myself by ranging a little about the world.

While I am in the country Jim garrisons my room in town and acts as guardian to the

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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book cases. Jim has intimated a wish to commence another work and I have agreed to join with him provided he will prepare a number of essays. I have commenced to do so myself, and unless he produces his share beforehand, I will dish mine up in some other form. I am in hope however of drawing some out of him.

The Patroon had very satisfactory intelligence from Uncle Mik sometime since about their property in the Mediterranean. It has relieved his mind exceedingly; and for a week after, he was one of the most spirited, gay hearted beaux in the City. I don't think he is so ardent in his devoirs to the divine Julia as formerly—I suspect she has an alabaster heart in that fair bosom—not that I think the Patroon ever made any serious attack upon it.

July 9th. In coming to town this morning I stopped at your father's. The old gentleman took me all over his territories to shew

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NEW YORK, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 1812

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me his subjects. Margaret has been rather unwell for a week past & looks pale; but is getting better. John too has taken cold and was indisposed, so that I did not see him. Your Mother, as you may suppose, is very anxious about the war, and wishes much that they would make peace so that you might return. The bear is in great spirits and is the wonder of the neighbouring swains. He does not seem however, to find favour in the eyes of the old man.

I have to conclude this letter abruptly in order to get it aboard the vessel. Your family all desired me to send as much love to you as my letter would carry.

Yours ever

W. I.

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 2<sup>d</sup> 1813

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*New York, Jan<sup>y</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> 1813.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

The uncertainty of your movements and my own wanderings have prevented me from keeping up any thing like a regular correspondence with you. Had I thought you would have wintered in England I should have written you before this—but I will not spin out excuses.

I passed the early part of last Summer at a little retreat near Hell Gate, in the neighbourhood of the Gracies, Rhinelanders, &c—and spent two months quietly and delightfully there. In August I set off for the residence of the Highland Chieftain, whither I was accompanied by James Renwick. We passed a few days very pleasantly there, during which time Renwick took a variety of sketches of the surrounding scenery. The noble captain has completely failed in the matrimonial campaign—the lady shewing no symptoms of increase. I begin to despair of my coat.



From the captain's I prowled to the country seat of John R. L—— where I remained for a week, in complete fairy land. His seat is spacious and elegant with fine grounds around it—and the neighbourhood is very gay and hospitable. I dined twice at the Chancellor's and once at Mr. & Mrs. Montgomery's. Our own household was numerous and charming. In addition to the ladies of the family, there were Miss McEven & Miss Hayward. Dick McCall also, was there; who was languishing at the feet of the fair Angelica. He is engaged to be married to her. Had you but seen me, Happy rogue! up to my ears in "an ocean of peacocks' feathers"—or rather like a "Strawberry smothered in cream." The mode of living at the manor is exactly after my own heart. You have every variety of rural amusements within your reach, and are left to yourself to occupy your time as you please. We made several charming excursions, and you may suppose how delightful they were,

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 2<sup>d</sup> 1813

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through such beautiful scenery, with such fine women to accompany you. They surpassed even our Sunday morning rambles among the groves on the Banks of the Hudson, when you and the divine Hen were so tender & sentimental, and you displayed your horsemanship so gallantly by leaping over a three barred gate.

After returning from my Hudson excursion I was sent on an expedition to the eastward to rescue our property from the hands of privateers men; who had carried in several vessels to eastern ports, having goods on board consigned to us. This was a busy & hurried jaunt, in which I had no time for amusement. After my return I was sent on a mission to Washington, to carry a petition from the importing merchants, praying for a remission of their Bond. This kept me for six weeks at Washington, from whence I had just returned, having happily succeeded in the object of my journey. There you have a brief sketch of my

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 2<sup>d</sup> 1813

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life for the six or seven months past—which has been rather a more busy one than common.

I am now once more at our old quarters, and am at this moment writing at my usual corner of the table before the fire which honest John has just trimmed and replenished; would to heaven, my dear fellow, you were as formerly seated opposite to me. I cannot tell you my good Hal, how very much I miss you. I feel just as I did after the departure of my brother Peter, whose place you had in a manner grown into and supplied. The worthy Patroon also has departed for Spain, to reside at Cadiz, as an agent for LeRoy Bayard & Mr. Eben, and though I rejoice in his good prospects yet I cannot but deplore his departure. So we get scattered over this troubled world—this making of fortunes is the very bane of social life; but I trust when they are made, we shall all gather together again and pass the rest of our lives with one another.

I have undertaken to conduct the Select

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 2<sup>d</sup> 1813

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Reviews, for the sake of pastime & employment of idle hours. I am handsomely paid & the work is no trouble.

When you return we must determine on some new mode of living, for I am heartily tired of this Boarding house system. Perhaps it will be better to get a handsome set of apartments & furnish them. But of this we will talk further when we meet. I was at your father's two or three days since. The old gentleman is highly tickled with the success of our Navy. He was so powerfully excited by the capture of the Macedonian, that he actually performed a journey to the Brothers, above Hellgate, where the frigates lay wind bound; and he brought away a piece of the Macedonian, which he seemed to treasure up with as much devotion as a pious Catholic does a piece of the true cross. Your Mother is well, and is looking forward with the utmost impatience for your return.

A few days since we had a superb dinner

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 2<sup>d</sup> 1813

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given to the naval heroes, at which all the great eaters and drinkers of the City were present. It was the noblest entertainment of the kind I ever witnessed. On New Year's eve a grand Ball was likewise given where there was a vast display of great & little people. The Livingstons were there in all their glory. Little Rule Britannia made a gallant appearance at the head of a train of beauties; among whom were the divine Hen, who looked very inviting, and little Taylor, who looked still more so. Britannia was gorgeously dressed in a queer kind of hat of stiff purple & silver stuff, that had marvelously the appearance of copper, and made us suppose that she had procured the real Mambrino's helmet. Her dress was trimmed with what we simply mistook for scalps, and supposed it was in honour of the nation, but we blushed at our ignorance on discovering that it was a gorgeous trimming of marten tips—would that some eminent furrier had been there to wonder and admire.

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 2<sup>d</sup> 1813

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The little Taylor was as amusing and fascinating as ever. She is an arrant little Tory and entertained me exceedingly with her sly jokes upon our navy. She looks uncommonly well, and is as plump as a partridge.

I am sorry to inform you that Mrs. Hoffman has been very alarmingly ill, and is still confined to her room though slowly recovering. Her complaint has symptoms of a pulmonary nature and gave great anxiety to her friends. I trust however that she will get the better of it. She bears her illness with all that gentleness & meekness that ever distinguish her, and appears more amiable & lovely under sickness than when in the full enjoyment of health and spirits.

Ann is passing the Winter at Mrs. Hoffman's. Charles has been unfortunate in business. I was always afraid that these huge ostentatious Book Establishments of Philadelphia would not answer. He has nearly settled with his creditors and is expected here in a few days.

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 2<sup>d</sup> 1813

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They have lost their youngest child but the eldest is one of the most beautiful little creatures I ever saw. Ann is in good health & spirits and looks uncommonly well.

Our winter does not promise to be as gay even as the last; neither do I feel as much disposed to enter into dissipation. Mrs. Renwick's family is in mourning for the death of Dr. Kemp. Of course they do not go abroad so much, and their fire side is more quiet & pleasant. Young Benj. has gone to Charlestown with Mr. Gray, to get an insight into Southern commerce. James has been lecturing at Columbia College on natural philosophy, in place of Dr. Kemp. He has gained great credit and is reappointed to the situation. The professors speak very highly of him, & are particularly pleased because he asks no compensation.

The Gracies are likewise in mourning for the death of Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Gracie's mother. Mr. Gracie has moved into his new

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 2<sup>d</sup> 1813

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house and I find a very warm reception at the fire side. Their countryseat was one of my strongholds last summer, as I lived in its vicinity. It is a charming warm-hearted family, and the old gentleman has the soul of a prince. The fair Sally is soon to give her hand to James King.

Goodhue is engaged to Miss Clarkson, the sister to the pretty one. The engagement suddenly took place as they walked from church on Christmas day, and report says the action was shorter than any of our naval victories, for the lady struck on the first Broadside.

This war has completely changed the face of things here. You would scarcely recognize our old peaceful city. Nothing is talked of but armies, navies, Battles &c. Men who had loitered about, the hangers on and incumbances of society, have all at once risen to importance and been the only useful men of the day.

Had not the miserable accounts from fron-



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NEW YORK, JANUARY 2<sup>d</sup> 1813

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tiers dampened in some manner the public zeal, I believe half of our young men would have been military mad. As it is, if this war continues & a regular be raised instead of depending on volunteers & militia, I believe we shall have the Commissions sought after with avidity, by young gentlemen of education and good breeding, and our army will be infinitely more respectable and infinitely more successful.

I hope this letter may find you on the eve of your departure for this country. I do long most earnestly to see you here again. I suppose my brother will remain longer in Europe, and much as I wish to see him home once more, I feel content that he should stay until he can return with money in both pockets and the whole of us be able to live after our own hearts for the rest of our lives.

God bless you my dear fellow.

Yours ever

W. I.

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 9<sup>th</sup> 1814

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*N York, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> 1814.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I have nothing now to tell you and write in great haste. Judge Van Ness desires me to inform you, that should there be any difficulty in your way, which his assistance would be important in removing, to write him word and he will do everything in his power to assist you, and even come up to Vermont if necessary. He appears to be very sincerely interested for your success. I enclose you a letter rec<sup>d</sup> by the Saratoga; which I presume is for L'Herbette. The household are all well.

God bless & prosper you.

Your friend

W. I.

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ALBANY, SEPTEMBER 26<sup>th</sup> 1814

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*Albany, Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> 1814.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I have just arrived here in the Suite of the Governor. How long I shall remain here I know not, perhaps a week or more; though, if affairs remain tranquil at New York, I shall endeavor to be sent with some business to one or other of the armies on the lines.

The Iron Greys go on very well. They are attached to a regiment commanded by Lt. Col. Cadwallader D. Colden, and will be encamped in a few days in the vicinity of Greenwich. I have been incessantly occupied since I saw you, by the duties of my station; and feel more pleased than ever with it. I am very anxious to hear how matters go with you. I think there is no prospect of immediate peace and am of opinion, that should the British wait the results of the present campaign, they will rather be disposed to continue hostilities; to wipe out the stains of late defeats. This Scourging Campaign has on

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ALBANY, SEPTEMBER 26<sup>th</sup> 1814

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the whole been thus far a degrading one to them & the Victory on Champlain will be a pill not easily swallowed. I wish you would treasure up all the striking particulars you may hear concerning it, as I must give McDonough a dash.

In great haste

Yours truly

W. I.

P.S. The Commercial world is aghast at New York in consequence of recent failures. Minturn & Champlin, Post & Minturn, Robert Bowne & Tho<sup>s</sup> Eddy have gone by the board & others are tottering.

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NEW YORK, OCTOBER 16<sup>th</sup> 1814

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*New York, Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> 1814.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I returned here some days since, after having made a rough but interesting journey to Sacketts Harbour. Military business goes on steadily here, and the progress that the militia have made is surprising. The Iron Greys have become very expert with their aims and correct in their evolutions; you will find yourself a complete Johnny Raw among them. By the bye, they are very much at a loss to conceive what you are about, & do not half like your long absence. The Gallant Sam has fairly changed front, and instead of laying siege to Douglas Castle has charged sword in hand and carried little Cooper's intrenchments. In plain English, he has abandoned the Lady of the Bleeding Heart and has paid his addresses to Alice Ann Cooper & what is more, they *are actually engaged*. I would scarce credit the report; until I had it confirmed from his own mouth. Your old

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NEW YORK, OCTOBER 16<sup>th</sup> 1814

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flame Maria Haight takes vast credit on herself for having been very potent in promoting the match: in honest secrecy the old puss thought at first Sam was in love with herself. He used to ask her to ride out to Coldens &c &c. She affected great confusion when twittered about him; a little time served to show her the mistake, and I must do her the justice to say, she turned it off very cleverly, and made a very faithful confidant. Sam & the company agree extremely well & matters go on very smoothly.

The folks here are in the alarm again; expecting an attack. You will have heard before this of the force with which Lord Hill is coming out, and it is certain the intention of his expedition was an attack on this place. Circumstances may induce him to alter it; but I think it probable we shall have our mettle tried. I am impatient to hear of your having effected your business and that you are on your route homewards. You will of

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NEW YORK, OCTOBER 16<sup>th</sup> 1814

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course be on the look out, and learn what is the situation of affairs; should we be in immediate danger of attack, this will not be the place to bring goods, as business will be at a stand.

We had letters recently from the doctor, by the John Adams. He was then in Amsterdam, & had been to Paris, Ghent &c. He was about to return to Ghent & was waiting the result of our negotiations, to determine his mercantile proceedings. He had become acquainted with the commissioners and I make no doubt was on very good terms with them. He proposed afterwards to rejoin the Brummagen Family.

You will see by the terms demanded by England, that there is no chance for a speedy peace—goods must therefore sell well. Every body here & I trust throughout the country is indignant at the insulting proposition of the enemy & but one spirit seems to animate all ranks & parties, a determination to bend

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NEW YORK, OCTOBER 16<sup>th</sup> 1814

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every effort to the promotion of a vigorous war.

The household at Mrs. Bradishes continues the same as usual. March is aide to Little Morton, and has swelled so much on the occasion, that he can hardly keep from busting his Breeches. Cruger is aide to Lewis, who has a very formidable staff. Hamilton, Little Lewis, Big Dom. Lynch, Montgomery Livingston, and Cruger—what a sage Council of War they could hold! I expect however, that Lewis will shortly be removed from the command of this post—and when the kite falls the bobs in the tail must follow.

Yours truly,

W. I.



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SANDY HOOK, MAY 25<sup>th</sup> 1815

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*Sandy Hook, May 25<sup>th</sup> 1815.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I was extremely sorry to leave New York, without taking you by the hand. Unsettled and almost joyless as has been my life for some time past, yet when I came to the last moment of parting from home, I confess it wrung my heart. But all is for the best and I am satisfied that a little absence will be greatly to my advantage.

I should have liked to have taken farewell of my worthy housemates, of whom I shall retain a warm remembrance, and shall toast their memories whenever I can get a taste of the real beverage. Remember me to Mrs. Bradish and Miss Claypoole,—the unexpected hurry of my departure prevented my seeing them, in fact I was too much hurried and worried at the moment to think of any thing.

Give my farewell to William Kemble. I shall write to you from England, and beg you to let me hear from you whenever you have

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SANDY HOOK, MAY 25<sup>th</sup> 1815

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a scribbling fit & leisure moment to spare to an old and constant friend.

God bless you

W. I.

Tell Lee I shall open his dispatches in the morning; in the meantime I give him my hearty good wishes, & beg him to bid the L——s adieu for me. I should have called there again had the vessel not sailed so abruptly.

The wind is springing up from the west and I trust we shall clear at sea before morning. The Ship gives much satisfaction & I am much pleased with my fellow passengers.

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 1815

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*Birmingham, July 5<sup>th</sup> 1815.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

You will see by the date of this letter, that I am safely housed under the hospitable roof of the Baron. I found him & the Baroness and all the Young Van Tromps in excellent health & spirits and most delightfully situated in the vicinity of the town. You would really be charmed with their establishment. My sister has altered very much since she left America; particularly within the last year. Instead of an extremely slender figure, she is now plump and healthful in her appearance, and far handsomer than ever she was. This England is certainly a most favourable country to the preservation of youth & youthful looks. I hope if I stay here a while I shall return quite a Younger again. My Brother Peter also seems quite unaltered though seven years have passed away since our parting—which you know is a fearful lapse of time to Gentlemen “of a certain age.” At present, poor

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 1815

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fellow, he is afflicted with a violent attack of the Erysipelas, which, though yielding to strict regimen and prescriptions confines him strictly to the house. I passed a week with him in Liverpool and find him the same identical being he was in America. I am in hopes he will be sufficiently well and disengaged in business to come up here soon, and to take some little excursions about the country; which would be of great service to him after having been for months worn down by business, anxiety, & indisposition.

I saw your Friend Richards at Liverpool & dined with him. He inquired about you & your affairs with much friendly interest. He has been a staunch and valuable friend to both Van Wart & Peter, and behaved himself in the handsomest manner. He is very much grieved at present at the utter overthrow of poor Boney, whose cause and character he vindicates with great gallantry.

I ought to have mentioned before, that my

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 1815

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voyage, though a wintry one as to weather, was extremely pleasant from good humour and good reading that prevailed from my fellow passengers. I do not believe that the same number of passengers were ever mewed up together for thirty days in dirty cabins and with equal deficiency of comforts that maintained more and unvarying harmony and good will for each other. I was particularly pleased with the British officers. Sir William Williams is a cheerful, good hearted well bred gentleman, with fine animal spirits and great urbanity. Heckey is one of the best tempered, honest hearted fellows alive, but Major Hancock, I found one of the most original, entertaining and interesting characters that I have met with for a long time. A scholar, a man of reading & observation and of great humour and excentricity. I trust I shall meet with some of these gentlemen again at London, or in the course of my rambles in England.

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 1815

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I found honest Jack Wilkes at Birmingham. He was on the hunt for me on the night of my arrival, in company with Van Wart but I got to the house without meeting them. I regretted it, as I am told Jack was a little elevated, having dined out & got mellow on *Gooseberry* wine! We roasted him soundly for it the next day when he dined at Van Warts. He is gone to Liverpool but I hope to see him here soon again. I am happy to find that I shall be likely to meet his sister in London. I am in daily expectation of James Renwick's arrival here on his way to Liverpool where he is to be the day after tomorrow. I found from Mr. Davidson, what were his movements, & wrote to him to London to stop here on his way down, that we might connect future campaigning.

I am delighted with England. The country is enchanting and I have experienced as yet nothing but kindness and civility. I think it probable I shall go up to London for a few

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 1815

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days before Parliament rises & the theatres close; after which I shall return to this place & from hence make excursions throughout the country.

I have forbore making comments on the wonderful events that are taking place in the political world. They are too vast and astonishing to be grasped in the narrow compass of a familiar letter—and indeed as yet I can do nothing but look on in stupid amazement—wondering with vacant conjecture—“what will take place next?” I am determined however, to get a near view of the actors in this great Drama.

Just before I left N. York, Lee put in my hand a note to be read when I should be out to sea. I read it according to the directions and found it to be a contradiction of the story which he told us about his declaration & engagement to Miss S. L—— He said the story was merely got up to prevent yourself, D. Sampayo and me from quizzing him about

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 1815

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her. A very paltry excuse, especially, as I had some time ceased to speak to him about her. He said his fabrication was known but to us three & if we said no more about it, the thing would go no further. He requested me to write to him from Europe.—*We do no such thing*. I have not got over the disgust occasioned by the singular note and still more strange fabrication. I consider his conduct, as totally irreconcilable to my ideas of honourable & delicate principle. I consider a man who can indulge in such an elaborate and systematic falsification of his word, involving too the character & interests of others, particularly of such a being as S. L——as too dangerous a man to be admitted freely & confidentially into domestic circles. I must say there was something about his pretended disclosure at which my feelings revolted. I felt pained at the prospect of a union so dissimilar and discordant—and I even felt that delicate respect & admiration which I had long entertained for



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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 1815

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Miss L—— impaired and almost prostrated at the idea of her having so suddenly and strangely imbibed an attachment which argued a coarse and gross taste, courted as she has been by glaring attentions and hyperbolical flattery. You will recollect our conversation on this subject. I do not know but that this feeling of transient disgust made me less particular in seeking a particular farewell from the ladies of the Palace than I should otherwise have been. I beg when you see them you will assure them of my unaltered friendship and most heartfelt good wishes. They have made many hours & days of my life pass happily and I shall always think of them with the most delightful recollections. I find Peter sent out a quantity of fashionable music to me, which was chosen by little Ellen Johnson, who has become a Mistress of the art. I intended it for the Miss L——s and hope it has been delivered.

I cannot tell you how happy I feel at find-

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 1815

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ing myself embosomed in my sister's charming little family. I am like another being from what I was in that listless period of existence that preceded my departure from America. It seems as if my whole nature had changed—a thousand kind feelings and affections that had lain torpid, are aroused within me—my very blood seems to flow more warm and sprightly. Her children surpass my expectations. The boys are noble little fellows—full of innocent gaiety, buxom health and eternal good humour. My little god daughter Matilda is a sweet playful child, and even little Marianne, though a mere mite of mortality, is full of pleasantness & good spirits. Every thing around me too, is so exactly to my taste. The House, the grounds, the Household establishment, the mode of living; never before did I find myself more completely at home. I wish to heavens you were here to enjoy all this with me—you would be most heartily welcomed.

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 1815

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I found on my arrival at Liverpool that Charles Kemble & his wife were acting there. I called on them and renewed our acquaintance. Kemble tells me that in consequence of his being about on the continent he did not get the letters from America until long after they were written. The terms offered by Mr. Cooper were not such as to tempt them across the Atlantic, as they could make as much by travelling among the provincial Theatres of England. Besides they have a large & encreasing family which would be of itself a detriment. Kemble however talks as if he should like to make an excursion to America himself for a year & leave Mrs. K. & the family in England. Such I think would be his best plan as Mrs. K., though an actress of undoubted talents, has grown almost too large for many of the characters she plays—particularly for the eyes of American audiences, who you know are accustomed to the more delicate figures of our American ladies.

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 1815

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I should think a liberal offer might tempt Kemble to pay America a visit.

Give my kindest remembrances to Mrs. Bradish, Miss Bradish, Miss Claypoole and all the household, especially my worthy friend Johnson, whose health I hope to drink in the true Beverage in his own brave country before long.

When you see Mrs. Renwick remember me heartily to her and her family & tell her I shall keep a sharp look out upon that wild youth Jamie, who I fear is playing what Launce calls "the prodigious Son" at London.

Remember me affectionately also to my good friends the Hoffmans, and let me know how they all do and whether Charles Nicholas continues in public service. I shall write to you again soon & hope to receive some lines from you in return.

Your friend

W. I.

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 19<sup>th</sup> 1815

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*Liverpool, August 19<sup>th</sup> 1815.*

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

I cannot tell how much I have been gratified by your long letter of the 8th July. I shall endeavour to repay it, when I have more leisure, by a letter of more length if not more value, than I am able to write at present. I have just returned from a delightful tour in Wales with Renwick, of which I have no time to furnish particulars. Our route was from Birmingham to the Leasowes, Hagley, Worcester, Tewkesbury, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bath, Bristol, Chepstow, Tintern, Monmouth, Hereford, Leominster, Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Ellsmere, Langosham, Conway, Caernarvon, Bethgallert Llanrwst, Ruthin, Denbigh, Chester, Liverpool. As you know the country, you may judge what a charming tour it has been. As we had no letters to the Cloughs I had not an opportunity of seeing your friend the little Apothecary, who had such a passion for great Lakes and mighty

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 19<sup>th</sup> 1815

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rivers; I had forgotten in fact whether he lived in Denbigh or one of the neighbouring villages. I found Renwick an excellent travelling companion, and, from his uncommon memory, an exceeding good book of reference, so as to save me a vast deal of trouble in consulting my travelling books. The professor is now in Liverpool & will remain here until Smedburg sails, when he intends paying Scotland a visit.

My Brother is still an invalid, but recovering from the flames of St. Anthony, in which he has been almost consumed. He has been troubled for a few days past with rheumatic pains in one of his legs. I hope however that he will soon be well enough to make an excursion to Birmingham & that a visit to some watering place will completely restore him.

About the subject of Lee's conduct, I gave you my opinion in a former letter and am happy to find it accords so perfectly with your own. Indeed I was sure from your correct-

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 19<sup>th</sup> 1815

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ness of mind, you could not but revolt from such a gross unnecessary imposition, set on elaborate tissue of fabrication; above all, such an unwarrantable abuse of a lady's name, whose character & conduct would awe any being of the most ordinary delicacy into scrupulous respect. Upon my soul, the more I think of it, the more I am surprised at the hardihood of Lee in daring to treat with such licentious tongue, the name of such a pure and delicate creature as S—— L. But I need not dwell on this subject as I know you feel exactly as I do, and I think the manner in which you treated Lee exactly right. You may be assured I shall never mention the matter to any other being but yourself—though, as Dennis was in some measure in Lee's wide spread confidence I question whether he has not proclaimed it on the house tops.

I received a very good, that is to say a very characteristic Letter yesterday from that

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 19<sup>th</sup> 1815

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worthy little Tar, Jack Nicholson, dated 7 July on Board the Flambeau off Algiers, & giving a brief account of our affairs with Algiers. He mentions that "they fell in with & captured the Admiral's ship and *killed him*." As this is all that Jack's brevity will allow him to say on the subject I should be at a loss to know whether they killed the admiral *before* or *after* his capture. The well known humanity of our tars however, induces me to the former conclusion. He informs me that he had written to the Livingstons & sent them *Otto of Roses, &c.*

This triumph will completely fix Decatur's Reputation—he may now repose on his Laurels & have wherewithal to solace himself under their shade. Give my hearty congratulations to Mrs. Decatur, & tell her that now I am willing she shall have the Commodore to herself, and with all her comfort & happiness with him.—A gallanter fellow never stepped a quarter deck—God bless him.



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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 19<sup>th</sup> 1815

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The Wiggins family & Madame Bonaparte passed thro here while I was in Wales. I understand that they are at Cheltenham, but it is probable they will soon pass over to the continent, as the ladies are very anxious to visit Paris, though Wiggins wishes to stop a while in England. I think the poor man has his hands full with such a bevy of beautiful women under his charge, and all doubtless bent on pleasure and admiration.

Scott & Mercer likewise passed thro' here while I was abroad. What think you of Poor Boney in America—his fallen fortunes have awakened sympathy even in England. For my part I feel a kindness for him in his distresses, & think the cabinet here have acted with much littleness in their treatment of him.

I rec<sup>d</sup> a letter from Colden declaring the fallacy of his project. I had long before lost all faith in it & had taken no steps concerning it, in this country.

I beg you will remember me with great

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 19<sup>th</sup> 1815

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regard to Mrs. & Miss Bradish & Miss Claypoole. I sent a No. of Byron's Hebrew Melodies to Miss B—— by Mr. Clay which I hope she received.

Give my hearty recollections to those two worthies Walker and Johnson and my good wishes to all the household—I shall write you more particularly soon.

Yours ever

W. I.

P.S. Should you in the course of your journeyings see my fair friend Mrs. Campbell of Philadelphia give her my sincere regards. If you visit Philadelphia I am sure their home will be one of your favorite resorts.

I shall attend to your request concerning Old Books, and shall peep into all the little stalls that I meet with.

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 23<sup>d</sup> 1815

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*Liverpool, August 23<sup>d</sup> 1815.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I wrote you a hasty letter a few days since which you will receive per the Gen<sup>l</sup> Hamilton. —Since then I have rec<sup>d</sup> your letter by the Pacific, and have again to express my sense of this attention. I had purposed writing you a long & particular letter; but have been so much engaged in scribbling to various persons, and in attending a little to our business here, on account of Peter's indisposition, that I have no time to write leisurely & fully.

I am very glad to hear that you are likely to make an arrangement with the N. W. Co. on advantageous terms. I am satisfied that in your hands it will turn to profitable account, though I think with you that nothing but a prospect of very considerable & certain gain should tempt you in any wise to link your fortunes with others, or place your independence of life & action in any wise in their control.

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 23<sup>d</sup> 1815

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I trust your operations on this side of the water will be successful, though you made rather a bad outset in remitting specie. Our business I trust will be very *good*—it certainly will be very *great*, this year, and will give us credit, if not profit. Notwithstanding that Peter has been an invalid, and confined to the house almost continually since the Treaty of Ghent, yet he has managed to get through an immensity of business. He is slowly getting over his complaint; but is very much afflicted at present with the rheumatism. He has very comfortable & handsome apartments in Bold St. where I reside at present with him. Thomas, that mirror of silent & discreet domestics, still acts as his Squire; and retains the same immovable solemnity of muscle that marked his countenance when you were here.

I do not know whether I mentioned to you my having become acquainted with Little Booth, during my short visit to London. I visited her several times and was very much

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 23<sup>d</sup> 1815

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charmed with her. She frequently mentioned you with great regard. Little Fidel is still in full fire & vigour—and one of the most tyrannical little villains that ever existed. He ramps & roars & rages at his little mistress with such tremendous violence that I was more than ever afraid that he would swallow her alive.

While at London I made an excursion to Sydenham to visit Mr. Campbell—unfortunately he was not at home. I spent an hour in conversation with Mrs. Campbell—who is a most engaging & interesting woman. Campbell was still engaged in getting his critical work through the press—and as he is a rigid censor of his own works—correcting is as laborious as composition to him. He alters & amends until the last moment. I am in hopes when he has this work off his hands, he will attempt another poem. Mrs. C gave me some anecdotes of Scott—but none so remarkable as to dwell in my memory. He has lost much by the failure of the Ballan-

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 23<sup>d</sup> 1815

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tynes, but is as merry & unconcerned to all appearance as ever—one of the happiest fellows that ever wrote poetry. I find it is very much doubted whether he is the Author of *Waverly* & *Guy Mannering*—Brown, one of the publishers, positively says he is not. It is reported that another novel will soon make its appearance from the same hand, called the *Antiquarian*.

I was agreeably surprised the other day by the arrival of long Peter Ogden—the *hero* of New Orleans (to use an American expression). He is likely to be a good deal in Liverpool and will have lodgings in our neighborhood. Lawrence and his wife (late Fanny Ogden) have likewise arrived. I saw them just after their landing. They have had a remarkably fine voyage. This place swarms with Americans—you never saw a more motley race of beings—some seem as if just from the woods, and yet stalk about the streets & public places with all the easy *nonchalance* that they would

about their own villages. Nothing can surpass the dauntless independence of all form, ceremony, fashion or regulation of a downright, unsophisticated American. Since the war too, particularly, one lad seems to think they are "salt of the earth," and the legitimate lords of creation. It would delight you to see some of them playing Indians when surrounded by the wonders & improvements of the old world. It is impossible to match these fellows with anything on this side of the water. Let an Englishman talk of the Battle of Waterloo & they will immediately bring New Orleans & Plattsburgh. A thorough bred, thoroughly appointed soldier, is nothing to a Kentucky Rifleman—as to British Lakes & rivers they are completely drowned in Lake Superior & the Mississippi. The Welsh Mountains are mole hills to the Alleghany—and as to all mechanical improvements they are totally eclipsed & annihilated by an American Steam Boat.

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 23<sup>d</sup> 1815

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I have had no letter from Thomas since I have been in England—which rather surprises me, knowing his great propensity to write even when he has nothing to say. How does the magazine come on? I shall continue to find out periodical works for it until I can make some arrangement in London to take the troublesome duty off our hands.

I should like to see the National Intelligencer, now, that Jim is writing for it. These late triumphs on the continent will be sore blows to Jim's plans—they will materially delay the great object of his life—the overthrow of the British Empire. His grand coadjutor Poor Boney has at length left the coast—for St. Helena.

I must say I think the Cabinet has acted with littleness toward him. In spite of all his misdeeds he is a noble fellow,—and I am confident will eclipse in the eyes of Posterity, all the crowned wiseacres that have crushed him by their overwhelming confederacy.



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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 23<sup>d</sup> 1815

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If any thing could place the Prince Regent in a more ridiculous light, it is Bonaparte suing for his magnanimous protection.—Every compliment paid to this bloated sensualist, this inflation of sack & sugar, turns to the keenest sarcasm—and nothing shows more completely the caprices of fortune and how truly she delights in reversing the relative situations of persons & baffling the flights of intellect & enterprizes—than that, of all the monarchs of Europe, *Bonaparte* should be brought to the feet of the *Prince Regent*.

“An eagle towering in his pride of place  
Was by a mousing owl hawked at & killed.”

In mentioning Mrs. Campbell I ought to have told you that she spoke very particularly and very kindly of you. You were also inquired after by various good people of Birmingham, particularly the Binghams, where Renwick & myself dined. You may recollect the family. The old Gentleman is a hearty good humoured, right down John Bull,

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 23<sup>d</sup> 1815

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has very pretty & amiable daughters, one of them a little lame & a charming woman for a wife. It is a family where Peter is fond of visiting. During the short stays I have made at Birmingham I have found several very agreeable acquaintances among the neighbours.

My only acquaintances as yet in this place are the families of Mr. Richard & Mr. Woolsey. Mr. Richards is at present out of town. Mrs. Woolsey you must certainly recollect. She is a perfect lady and a most amiable interesting woman—she likewise mentioned you in very flattering terms.

Remember me to Mrs. Bradishes family & household.

Peter Ogden tells me that my old friend & quondam Vassal William served him as *Valet de place* during his residence in N York. The good old man must feel much comfort in the restoration of the Bourbons.

Yours ever

W. I.

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LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 23<sup>d</sup> 1815

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P.S. If you can at any time find me pamphlets, newspapers &c I should be very glad to see them—you may leave them at our counting room to be forwarded by *private hand*. By a regulation of the last parliament all letters &c arriving from abroad are subject to full postage—and from a blunder in the Act, Newspapers &c are subject to equal postage with letters, so that a parcel of Newspapers will come to perhaps a couple of Guineas. This prevents their being taken out of the post office & completely balks us in the reception of news in that way. It is expected that a provision will be made when parliament meets permitting them to be delivered with light postage—until then however the only mode of getting them to us is privately, by the hands of Captains or passengers.

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LIVERPOOL, SEPTEMBER 8<sup>th</sup> 1815

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*Liverpool, Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> 1815.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I have just returned from accompanying Peter as far as Manchester, on his way to Harrowgate. He bore his journey so far very well, and yesterday I saw him off from Manchester, very comfortably stowed away in a Chaise, loaded with as many conveniences as the "Happy Man" whom you encountered of yore in Wales, and attended by his faithful, discreet, and taciturn man, Thomas—or as we more correctly call him "Solemn Silence." I trust the waters of Harrowgate will completely restore both skin & bone, which is nearly all that remains of him. I shall remain here as long as the fall business requires my presence, and then join him at Harrowgate.

I have not heard any thing of Conger since I saw him in London, except when in Bath, on my way to Wales. He had promised to meet me in Bath and accompany Renwick and myself on our Welsh Tour, but on inquir-

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LIVERPOOL, SEPTEMBER 8<sup>th</sup> 1815

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ing for him in that city I heard that he was at some watering place & would not return in some days. I am in hopes of soon seeing Charles King in Liverpool to await the arrival of his family. I saw much of him while in London and, as you may suppose, found him a most desirable companion, in the Metropolis. Charles is exactly what an American should be abroad—frank, manly & unaffected in his habits & manners, liberal & independent in his opinions, generous & unprejudiced in his sentiments towards other nations, but most loyally attached to his own.

Peter received a letter some few days since, from Colin Robertson, dated on the Banks of the Superior.—He was to return by the way of Hudson Bay. He mentions having heard of your intention of doing business with the N W—but hoped that it is only Commission business—as he thought that Comp<sup>y</sup> on the decline. He seems very sanguine as to the business in which he is engaged.

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LIVERPOOL, SEPTEMBER 8<sup>th</sup> 1815

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I have not heard any thing of Madame Bonaparte since her arrival in this country, except that the newspapers mention her being at Cheltenham. There are so many huge stars and comets thrown out of their orbits & whirling about the world at present, that a little star, like Mad<sup>m</sup> B. attracts but slight attention, even though she draws after her so sparkling a tail as the Wiggins family.

I regret very much that I was not in Liverpool when she arrived. I should have liked to have congratulated the little lady on the prospect of a speedy consummation of the great wish of her heart, a visit to Paris—and I should have delighted to bask in the sweet smiles of Mrs. W. and her charming sister.

We were very uneasy some few days since from news from the family of the Van Tromps that little Irving had received a violent contusion in the head by a fall from a Pony—he however is now perfectly recovered, having inherited a solid Dutch head from his father.

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LIVERPOOL, SEPTEMBER 8<sup>th</sup> 1815

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By mistake one of our clerks has just put a small parcel of music, for Miss Bradish, in the letter bag of the Pacific—I had intended to have sent it by private hand. They are merely a few fashionable songs. I can't say much as to the selection. Liverpool is not the best place to get new music, & these were chosen by another hand. Give my regards to Mrs. Bradish & her daughter—and my hearty remembrances to Johnson Walker & all the household.

In great haste,

Yours sincerely

W. I.

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LIVERPOOL, SEPTEMBER 26<sup>th</sup> 1815

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*Liverpool, Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> 1815.*

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

I have at this moment so many things to attend to and letters to write, and the ship by which I send this is so immediately on the wing, that I have barely time to scrawl a few lines. I cannot lose a moment, however, in returning you a thousand thanks for your delightful letters by the Minerva Smyth. They were exactly such as a man wishes, when away from home; and if you knew how much they gratified me, I am sure you would think the trouble of them compensated a hundred fold.

The Minerva Smyth arrived the night before last. Yesterday morning I heard of her being in the river, and to my utter astonishment, that the worthy Governor was on board. I was ready to exclaim, "Stands Scotland where it did?" for it really seemed as if one of the pillars of the earth had quit its base to take a ramble. The world is surely topsy-turvy



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LIVERPOOL, SEPTEMBER 26<sup>th</sup> 1815

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and its inhabitants all shaken out of place. Emperors and kings, statesmen and philosophers, Bonaparte, Alexander, Johnson, and the Wiggins's, all strolling about the face of the earth.

No sooner did I hear of the interesting group that had come out in the *Minerva Smyth*, than, with my usual excitement, which is apt to put me in a fever, and make me overshoot my mark, I got a boat and set off for the ship, which lay about three miles off. The weather was boisterous—the Mersey rough. I got well ducked; and, when I arrived on board, had the satisfaction to hear that my eagerness had, as usual, led me upon a wild-goose chase, and that, had I made the least inquiry, I should have found the passengers had all landed early in the morning. Away then I paddled across the river; and the tide being contrary, was landed at the upper part of Liverpool; had to trudge two miles through dirty lanes and alleys; was two or

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LIVERPOOL, SEPTEMBER 26<sup>th</sup> 1815

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three times entangled among the docks, and baulked by drawbridges thrown open, so that it was afternoon before I got to the Liverpool Arms, where I found the party all comfortably housed.

I cannot tell you how rejoiced I was to take the worthy Governor by the hand and to find myself in the delightful little circle which brought New York so completely home to my recollection and feelings. Mrs. King has made an excellent sailor—and the children are in fine health and spirits. Little Eliza is as wild as an Indian and delighted with everything around her. Little Hatty is a beautiful creature and the Boy a noble animal! I never saw a nobler child. I dined with them and passed four hours most happily in talking over past scenes and distant friends.

Charles King has not arrived yet, but I expect he will be here to-morrow or next day. Mrs. King is in better health than when I left New York and is in excellent spirits. The

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LIVERPOOL, SEPTEMBER 26<sup>th</sup> 1815

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children have absolutely astonished the people at the hotel. You know the great decorum of the English and the system of quiet and reserve by which their children are brought to behave like little men and women—whereas the little Kings, who are full of spirits and health, are just as noisy and frolicsome as if out at Hellgate—and racket about the hotel just as they would at Papa Gracie's in State St. I was infinitely amused with their rantipole gambols—the little creatures are like birds let loose from a cage. Eliza King showed me, with great pride, a certificate of the good behaviour of herself and Hatty, during the voyage, signed by the passengers.

Peter is at Harrowgate, taking the waters—he writes that he finds himself much better—though still troubled with the rheumatism. I am remaining in Liverpool to finish our fall business and get the establishment here in perfect order—after which I shall join Peter.

I will write you more particularly when I

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LIVERPOOL, SEPTEMBER 26<sup>th</sup> 1815

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have a moment's time. Remember me to  
all the household and to your family.

Yours truly

W. I.

I mentioned in a previous letter that little  
Booth had been ill at Hertford during a  
Dramatic Tour. She is perfectly recovered  
and performs in London. She was so dan-  
gerously ill that at one time she was given  
over by the Physicians.

I have become acquainted with the Graemes  
who speak of you with great kindness. I shall  
give you further account of them when I  
write particularly. I am very much pleased  
with them.

I have met them with a Mrs. Donovan, a  
very young and beautiful woman. She looks  
something like Mrs. Murphy—do you recol-  
lect her? By the way I am glad to hear that  
Mrs. Murphy is over now in New York—  
remember me to her with great regard. I  
hope she retains her beauty.

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LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 17<sup>th</sup> 1815

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*Liverpool, Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> 1815.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

I write merely to tell you that you must not think me negligent in my correspondence. I will most certainly write to you amply when I have time; but for several weeks past I have been more *really* busy than I ever was in my life. As I am a complete novice in business it of course takes up my whole time and completely occupies my mind, so that at present I am as dull commonplacéd a fellow as ever figured upon Change. When I once more emerge from the mud of Liverpool, and shake off the sordid cares of the Counting House, you shall hear from me.

Indeed the present life I lead is utterly destitute of anecdote, or anything that could furnish interest or embellishment to a letter— & my imagination is too much jaded by pounds shillings and pence to be able to invent facts or adorn realities.

By my last letter from Peter I learn that he

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LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 17<sup>th</sup> 1815

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was about to leave Harrowgate & limp toward Birmingham. His health was generally better, but his inveterate rheumatic complaint still torments him and renders him so much a cripple that he can scarcely walk about the room.

I am in hope of being able to visit the good folks at Birmingham in a little while & shall feel right glad to turn my back upon Liverpool for a season. I have been too much occupied here to think much of society or amusement, otherwise I should have found the place rather *triste*. As I did not expect to pass any time in Liverpool, I brought out no letters for the place & of course know scarce any one except those with whom I have dealings in business. I have experienced very hospitable treatment from Mr. Woolsey, Davidson & Macgregor & find honest Richards' house quite a home. But there is a great lack of companions of my own taste and turn.

I have become very well acquainted with the Graemes and am very much pleased with

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LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 17<sup>th</sup> 1815

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them—Lawrence Graeme has lately returned home on furlough. I am sorry he was not able to pass through N York on his return from Canada—he appears to be a very fine young man. Miss Grace is as blooming as Hebe. She is very much given to write poetry, notwithstanding the severe criticisms of the Old Colonel, who like honest Burchell, cries fudge! at the end of every stanza.

Renwick is still in Scotland figuring amongst the Caledonian Hunts. I have not had a letter from him since his departure for the North, but hear of him occasionally through Davidson. I expect he has mounted a pair of Leather Breeches and is playing off the knowing one of the turf.

I have not heard anything of little Madame Bonaparte for sometime. My last accounts mentioned her as being still at Cheltenham enjoying herself greatly. The Wiggins were likewise there, honest Wiggins confined to his room by the rheumatism.

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LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 17<sup>th</sup> 1815

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Johnson is still in Liverpool. I occasionally meet him at Dinner & on Change—and we talk over old times and the many illustrious events that happened under his merciful & glorious government.

I hope you will accept this as *an apology* for a letter. I am writing in real hurry—give my affectionate remembrances to Mrs. & Miss Bradish & Miss Claypoole if still with you & my hearty regards to the household.

Your friend

W. I.



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LIVERPOOL, NOVEMBER 2<sup>d</sup> 1815

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*Liverpool, Nov. 2<sup>d</sup> 1815.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

Mr. Richards put in my hands some few days since a letter from you, ordering a number of Books. As honest Richards seldom meddles with any books beyond his counting house library he handed the order to me requesting I would attend to it.

I have put it in the hands of Mr. Muncaster, a Bookseller of this place, who will gather together the works, and get as many of them as possible in sheets, that they may be bound up here, according to my directions. He has promised to put them at as favorable terms as they could be procured from any of the trade. He is the Bookseller from whom Peter has been in the habit of procuring all the periodical and other publications sent out to me for two or three years past, and is very fair and reasonable in his dealings. As Murray is not the publisher of the greater part of the works, he would not be able to af-

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LIVERPOOL, NOVEMBER 2<sup>d</sup> 1815

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ford them cheaper than Mr. Muncaster. They shall be forwarded to you as soon as possible.

I wish I had anything interesting or agreeable to tell you, but I have been for some time past completely occupied in the concerns of our Liverpool establishment, and as I am a novice in business, they have engrossed my whole attention and render me good for nothing else. Peter is in Birmingham where I hope to join him next week, and have a little relaxation from my labours. I anticipate much gratification from the assemblage of our family forces in the redoubtable castle of the Van Tromps.

I was introduced a day or two since to Mrs. Wood, lately returned from Scotland, one of the ladies of New Abbey, where you used to figure during your Scottish campaign. She appears to be a very frank, pleasant woman and I have no doubt I shall be still more pleased on further acquaintance.

The Graeme and his clan are all well. The

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LIVERPOOL, NOVEMBER 2<sup>d</sup> 1815

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fair Grace continues most desperately poetical, in spite of the criticisms of the old Colonel and the rest of the family, who treat her poor Muse in the most unfeeling manner. I have unfortunately got entangled in an obstinate critical warfare with her on a passage in one of her poems, where she compares the eye of her hero to a sparkling gem *set in a pearly sea*. To this I objected most stoutly, inasmuch as I have never heard of anything set in the sea except the sun. I would allow her hero a *pearly tear*, or what was more probably the case, a *drop* in his eye, or if she pleased a *cataract*, but as to having a sea in his eye, it was altogether inadmissible—unless he was some aspiring dignitary of the Church.

The Colonel's son George is home on furlough. He was wounded in the Battle of Waterloo—he is a fine animated handsome little fellow and extremely agreeable. The Colonel's little family group is unconsciously pleasing and interesting.

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LIVERPOOL, NOVEMBER 2<sup>d</sup> 1815

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Andrew Hamilton arrived here about a fortnight since and has gone up to London, from whence, when regularly equipped and fitted out he was to go to Cheltenham where Mrs. O'Berne has been passing the fashionable season. I have heard nothing of Mad. Bonaparte excepting that she was fashionable at Cheltenham and had taken lodgings separate from the Wiggins's. Johnson is still in Liverpool and will remain here some time longer. Peter Ogden is likewise here and waxing very fat. James Renwick is playing the roaring blade in Scotland. I am told by good authority that he has fleeced all the old ladies in Dumfries at cards—and has got the character among them of a perfect leg.

Yours ever

W. I.

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BIRMINGHAM, DECEMBER 28<sup>th</sup> 1815

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*Birmingham, Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> 1815.*

DEAR BREVOORT:—

It is a long while since I have heard from you, and since your last, we have been very uneasy in consequence of hearing of your being dangerously ill. Subsequent accounts, however, have again put you on your legs and relieved us from our anxiety. I have lately been on a short visit to London; merely to see sights and visit public places. Our worthy friend, Johnson, and his brother arrived in town while I was there, and we were frequently together. The Governor enjoyed the amusements of London with high zest, and like myself, was a great frequenter of the theatres—particularly when Miss O'Nealle performed. We both agreed that were you in England you would infallibly fall in love with this "divine perfection of a woman." She is, to my eyes, the most soul subduing actress I ever saw. I do not mean from her personal charms, which are great, but from the truth,

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BIRMINGHAM, DECEMBER 28<sup>th</sup> 1815

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force and pathos of her acting. I never have been so completely melted, moved and overcome at a theatre as by her performances. I do not think much of the other novelties of the day. Mrs. Mardyn, about whom much has been said and written, is vulgar without humour and hoydenish without real whim and vivacity. She is pretty, but a very bad actress. Kean—the prodigy—is to me insufferable. He is vulgar—full of trick and a complete mannerist. This is merely my opinion. He is cried up as a second Garrick—as a reformer of the stage, etc., etc.,—it may be so. He may be right and all other actors wrong—this is certain, he is either very good or very bad. I think decidedly the latter; and I find no medium opinions concerning him.

I am delighted with Young, who acts with great judgment, discrimination and feeling. I think him much the best actor at present on the English stage. His Hamlet is a very

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BIRMINGHAM, DECEMBER 28<sup>th</sup> 1815

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fine performance, as is likewise his Stranger, Pierre, Chamout, etc. I have not seen his Macbeth, which I should not suppose could equal Cooper's. In fact in certain characters, such as may be classed with Macbeth, I do not think that Cooper has his equal in England. Young is the only actor I have seen that can be compared with him. I cannot help thinking if Cooper had a fair chance, and the public were to see him in his principal characters, he would take the lead at one of the London theatres. But there is so much party work, managerial influence, and such a widely spread and elaborate system of falsehood and misrepresentation connected with the London theatres, that a stranger who is not peculiarly favored by the managers, or assisted by the prepossessions of the public, stands no chance. I shall never forget Cooper's acting in Macbeth last spring, when he was stimulated to exertion by the presence of a number of British officers. I have seen nothing equal to it in

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BIRMINGHAM, DECEMBER 28<sup>th</sup> 1815

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England. Cooper requires excitement, to arouse him from a monotonous, commonplacèd manner he is apt to fall into, in consequence of acting so often before indifferent houses. I presume the crowded audiences which I am told have filled our theatres this season, must bring him out in full splendour.

While at London, I saw Campbell, who is busily employed printing his long promised work. The publisher has been extremely dilatory, and has kept poor Campbell lingering over the pages of this work for months longer than was necessary. He will in a little while get through with the printing of it, but it will not be published before spring. As usual, he is busy correcting, altering and adding to it, to the last, and cannot turn his mind to anything else until this is out of hand.

I am writing this letter at the warehouse, while waiting for Van Wart to go home to dinner—he is nearly ready and I must con-



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BIRMINGHAM, DECEMBER 28<sup>th</sup> 1815

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clude; but will write to you again soon, and give you more chit-chat.

Peter continues a cripple from the rheumatism and is confined to the house; I do not think he will be able to go abroad before spring. He, however, is very cheerful under his maladies. All the Van Tromps are well and in high spirits from the Christmas holidays.

I saw Charles King and family the very day I left London, where they had just arrived. They were in fine health and spirits. They tell me James Renwick was enjoying himself in Edinburgh. I have not heard from him for a long time. I had a long letter from Mrs. Renwick some time since and meant to have answered it before this, but have not been in the letter writing mood. I shall soon however pay off all debts of the kind. Remember me affectionately to Mrs. and Miss Bradish and your family. I rejoice to hear Gouv Kemble has returned safe and hope his voyage has

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BIRMINGHAM, DECEMBER 28<sup>th</sup> 1815

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been advantageous, but the war was too short  
to yield much pickings.

I am, dear Brevoort

(in great haste and hunger)

Affectionately yours

W. I.

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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*Birmingham, March 15<sup>th</sup> 1816.*

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

I have received your most kind letter of Feby 10th and also the Magazines and Newspapers forwarded by Mr. Selden. I believe I am also still in your debt for your letter of the 1 Jan<sup>r</sup>; but indeed I have been so completely driven out of my usual track of thought and feeling, by "stress of weather" in business that I have not been able to pen a single line on any subject that was not connected with traffic. I have therefore a host of friendly letters by me, unanswered, but shall now endeavour to reply to them without further procrastination. We have, in common with most American houses here, had a hard winter of it in many manners, owing to the cross purposes of last fall's business, and have been harassed to death to meet our engagements. I have never passed so anxious a time in my life—my rest has been broken & my health & spirits almost prostrated; but thank heavens

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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we have weathered the storm & got into smooth waters; and I begin to feel myself again. Brown has done wonders, and proved himself an able financeer, and, tho' a small man, a perfect giant in business. I cannot help maintaining that James Renwick has behaved in the most gratifying manner. At a time when we were exceedingly straightened I wrote to him begging to know if he could in any way assist us to a part of the amount we were deficient. He immediately opened a credit to us for the full amount, guaranteeing the payment of it and asking no security from us than our bare word. The manner in which this was done heightened the merit of it—from the contrast it formed to the extreme distrust and tenfold caution that had universally prevailed through the commercial world of England, in the present distressed times. I mention this because I know you will delight to hear anything that tends to illustrate the worth of Renwick—whom, the more I know

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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of him, the more I find reason to value & admire. You mention that Renwick's letters induce you to imagine that his spirits are depressed and harassed. I have not observed this—you know he is not one of those mercurial beings that are readily excited or cast down; and whatever may be the state of his mind, it has no remarkable operation on the even tenor of his deportment. I believe he has been worried with law business in England, which is not the most pleasant occupation: but he has been spending his winter very agreeably & advantageously in Edinburgh, and is now on a short tour in France; on his return he will embark at Liverpool for New York, where he is very anxious to be.

I was delighted with your information that Gouv Kemble intended coming out to remain at Liverpool. Peter has since had a letter from him confirming it, and it has occasioned great joy in the castle of the Van Tromps. What would I not give if you could likewise

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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join us; but it would be selfish to wish it; as I am sure your interest will be better consulted by remaining in New York; and eventually your happiness also. Whatever gratification you might derive from wandering for a while about Europe, the enjoyment would but be temporary; and dependent upon continual novelty & frequent change of plan; but the solid permanent happiness of life must spring from some settled *home*: and where would you find a home like N York?

I declare to you, now that I find myself likely to be detained in Europe by unexpected employment I often feel my heart yearning toward N York and the dear circle of friends I have left there. I recollect the thousand charms of existence which surrounded us there, and am astonished to think how insensible we were to them—but so it is, we are always regretting the past, or languishing for the distant; every spot is fresh & green but the one we stand on.

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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Your account of James Paulding's engagement & probability of the marriage soon taking place somewhat surprised, but at the same time gratified me. I am satisfied Paulding's talents will secure his fortunes with the ruling party and he will make a good husband and be all the happier for the change of condition. It is what we must all come to at last. I see you are hankering after it, and I confess I have done so for a long time past. We are however past that period when a man marries suddenly & inconsiderately—we may be longer making a choice, and consulting the convenience & concurrence of every circumstance, but we shall both come to it sooner or later. I therefore recommend you to marry without delay—you have sufficient means, connected with your knowledge & habits of business, to support a genteel establishment and I am certain that as soon as you are married you will experience a change in your ideas. All those vagabond,

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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roving propensities will cease. They are the offspring of idleness of mind and a want of something to fix the feelings. You are like a bark without an anchor, that drifts about at the mercy of every vagrant breeze, or trifling eddy—get a wife & she'll anchor you. But don't marry a fool because she has a pretty face—and don't seek after a great Belle—get such a girl as Mary Baillie—or get her if you can; though I am afraid she has still an unlucky kindness at heart for poor Bibby, which will stand in the way of her fortunes. I wish to God they were rich, and married, and happy.

By the bye, Bibby arrived in London while I was there and put up at the same Hotel with me, so that we were daily together. He is shortly to make his *début* at Covent Garden in Sir Pertinax. It is a most hazardous attempt. I feel very anxious for his success, but entertain strong apprehensions that the public may not take his imitations in the right



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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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way. In these matters, it is all luck. I wished him to make his first appearance in some character suitable to his age, appearance & manner such as Belcom; which he would certainly play at least tolerably & prepossess by his personal advantages and appropriate deportment, & thus secure some foothold with the public—but he was determined to go for the whole & perhaps he is right. But should he fail, he falls into utter D——n, whereas my plan would have given him a leading place in public opinion.

Before this you will have learnt the fate of poor Angelica Livingston.—I will not make any trite remarks on such an event—in my short experience I have seen so many lovely beings swept from the circle of my intimacy that I almost have grown callous to the shock—but the news of poor Angelica's death reached me in a moment of loneliness & depression and affected me most deeply. I have heard that Serena's health is likewise

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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extremely delicate.—I hope she may take warning by the irreparable losses she has sustained, and take more care of her fragile frame,—she always looked too delicate and spiritual for this rough, coarse world. You say she often inquires after me.—Give her assurances of my constant recollection—she is the heroine of all my poetical thoughts where they would picture anything very feminine and lovely. But where is the hero of romance worthy to bear away so peerless a face?—Not among the worthy young traders of New York most certainly.

I have had much gratification from the epistles of that worthy little Tar, Jack Nicholson; who I find still sighs in the bottom of his heart for the fair Serena; though he declares that his hopes do not aspire to such perfection. Why did not the Varlet bring home the head of Rais Hammida & lay it at her feet; that would have been a chivalric exploit few ladies could have withstood—and if Paulding had

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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only dished him up in full *length* (if I may be allowed the word) in a wood-cut in the Naval Chronicle like little David of yore with the head of Goliah in his fist, I think his suit would have been irresistible. In his last letter Nicholson talks something of the possibility of his visiting England this year. I hope government will keep him better employed, though I should receive him with open arms and be more than glad at the meeting. But I want him to continue in the career of honour and promotion and hope before many years to greet him as a Commodore.

You desire me in your letters to give you anecdotes of characters that I meet with and of anything interesting or amusing that occurs in the course of my roving. But in truth I had been so much engrossed by the cares of this world for some time past that I have not sought any society of the kind you are conscious about. My last stay in London which was for two months was a period of

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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great anxiety and I felt in no mood to form new acquaintances, or even to enjoy scenes around me. I seem to have lost my *cast*, and to have lost also all relish and aptitude for my usual pursuits. I hope to be able hereafter to give you more interesting letters. I think I shall visit Scotland this Summer, and if I can arrange matters shall previously make a short excursion to Paris, in May or June. My movements however must depend on various circumstances connected with business and Peter's health. He is still confined to the house; but more from extreme delicacy, in consequence of long nursing, than from any positive indisposition. When the Spring advances & the weather becomes settled & warm he will be able to take air & exercise. I long to have him reinstated, that he may accompany me in my outdoor rambles. I almost begin to lose all idea of him as a man of health & vigour.

During my last visit to London, as I was

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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one day strolling in Bond Street whom should I encounter but little cousin John, alias Tophet. You may be sure I was astonished at the reconnoitre; and not less pleased. The surprise was equal on his part, as he knew nothing of my being in England, and indeed had heard at one time that I was dead. He gave me another Volume of his eventful history; which certainly rivals that of Gil Blas. He is in great favour with the Governor of Trinidad, and has an office worth 2,000\$ per ann. besides other casual employments which assist to keep him comfortable. He has come to England in quest of a new office which it was expected would be made by Parliament, this session—but as it does not at present seem probable he thinks of returning. I saw him almost daily during the remainder of my stay in town. He is just the same honest, warm hearted, queer, amusing little fish—and is full of his recollections of New York which he thinks rather a preferable place to heaven.

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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When I was last in Liverpool (about 2 mo<sup>s</sup>. since) your Books were in a state of great forwardness—I have not heard since about them but trust they must have been shipped. I shall write down on the subject & likewise attend to your request in purchasing & sending out others.

You do not mention whether you are likely to make any arrangement with McTavish & the N. W. Company. I really feel great interest in your temporal as well as spiritual concerns and should like to know how you are making out in the world & what are your plans. If you remain in N York I think you ought to have some regular employment that should occupy part of your time and claim your personal attention. It would prevent that *ennui* of which you complain, and under which, in my days of Idleness I have so often suffered. Mere study will not do—it must be employment for the hands, where no great intellect is required; so that it may be attended

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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to in every mood of mind; and engage the attention when too enfeebled or relaxed for more intellectual pursuits.

By letters from Johnson, at Liverpool, I find he is on the point of sailing for New York, to resume the Government of a Colony. I can fancy the great joy that will be diffused throughout the establishment on his return & would give more than I choose to mention to be present on the occasion. He will give you some idea of the *gay dissipated* life we lead in London; where he figured in great style in the west end of the town.

I am very happy to hear that Mrs. Bradish and Eliza have recovered their health in a great degree, and hope to hear in my next letters of their perfect reestablishment. Give them my most affectionate regards and tell Mrs. Bradish that often & often this winter in London, when I have been suffering in my solitary chamber from a cold and indisposition, have I wished myself under her fostering

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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care and partaking of her grand specific, wine whey. By the mass, I look back with as much longing to her bounteous establishment, as ever the children of Israel did to the flesh pots of Egypt, or Tom Philips, to Norton's kitchen.

I wish you would give me a particular account of the whole household not forgetting old William, Fanny, and Flora & her offspring.—I hope the latter are cherished for my sake.

I shall endeavour in a day or two to pay off my arrearages to Mrs. Renwick for her long & delightful letter received last November.—I have not been in the vein of writing since or it should have long since been answered. William Renwick arrived in Liverpool during my absences so that I have not seen him.

I have had also a very agreeable letter from Sam Swartwout giving a promising account of his farm and his little wife, both of which promise to be very productive. I hope he may have abundant cause of rejoicing from both.



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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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And now I must bring this garrulous scrawl to a conclusion, as I have many other letters to write now I am in the vein.—What a scumble-scramble letter I have written! However, I have scribbled away just as I have been accustomed to talk to you—perfectly unstudied and unreserved, trusting to your friendship to excuse weaknesses and your discretion not to repeat confidings. Many parts of this letter I would not have trusted to any eye but yours, for though there are no matters of great secrecy, yet they are foolish thoughts & feelings that I would not wish repeated—so keep them to yourself.

I wish you would send me the numbers of the *Analectic Mag.* that have the traits of Indian character—& the story of King Philip; likewise a copy of the *History of New York*—send them by the first opportunity.

By the bye I have never heard whether a quantity of music that Peter sent out for me, & which must have arrived shortly after I left

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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America, was ever delivered according to my direction to the Misses Livingston; and if so, how it pleased. I wish you would let me know.

And now, my dear fellow, with my best remembrances to your worthy parents and family I have only to give you the affectionate regards & hearty blessing of your friend

W. L.

P. S. I am highly pleased with a favourable account I have received from others as well as yourself, of little Newman. I have had no letter from him, at which I am disappointed, but suppose he did not know where I was exactly. I wish, should his Ship come to New York, you would be attentive to him & see if he wants any assistance in procuring Books; or anything that may be of real service to him in acquiring useful information. His other wants will be taken care of; and perhaps Decatur's idea is correct,—that young officers should be taught to live on their pay, as it makes them careful managers.

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BIRMINGHAM, MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1816

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King Stephen must have arrived long before this letter with his cargo of live stock. I have seen none of the folks act that he has taken out; but should think that Barnes & his wife would be acquisitions. He offered Miss O'Neale 6,000£ for one year's engagement to perform in the American Theatres—but her engagements here would not permit her to accept the offer. She continues in great currency & is shortly to appear in comedy.

Little Booth is well & often speaks of you—she has lost Fidele, who died of the gout in his stomach from high living—thank God for this dispensation—he was a cursed noisy nasty little cur though his little mistress *took on* sadly for his loss.

Charles King & his family are all alive & merry in London where I have frequently the pleasure of seeing them. It was like being in New York to get among his joyous household.

Farewell.

W. I.

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LIVERPOOL, APRIL 29<sup>th</sup> 1816

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*Liverpool, April 29<sup>th</sup> 1816.*

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

I wrote you a rigmarole letter some time since from Birmingham. Since then I have been most of the time at Liverpool leading a most dreary life; for the hard times here make every body dismal. Peter is still at Birmingham, and the Spring has been so backward that he has not been able to trust his rheumatic limbs out of the house.

Your books were forwarded some time since by Ogden Richards & Selden. They ought to have been sent out long before but the Book-seller sent the Box thro' mistake to our Warehouse instead of Richards', and our clerks had no directions concerning them. So they reclined quietly in a corner until my arrival. By this opportunity I send you the last number of the Edinburgh Review, which is just out—it will come in the letter bag. There is a Surtout, close Bodied coat & Waist coat for you at our Counting House. I shall forward

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LIVERPOOL, APRIL 29<sup>th</sup> 1816

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it by the Rosalie, Capt. Murray, to sail 8th of next month.

I presume before this you have seen accounts from the London Papers of Bibby's first appearance in Sir Pertinax. The criticisms are favourable beyond my hopes. Even that stern critic the Examiner speaks in the highest terms of him. These favourable accounts are confirmed by a letter from Miss Booth to my Brother, who says "he acted *excellently* well." She says the Boxes were uncommonly brilliant; that there was occasional disturbance from the Galleries which were crowded by holiday people who had come to see a new afterpiece and who, not being able to hear themselves, determined that nobody else should.—At length the pit rose, hats waved, & pit & boxes united in applause *long and loud*, after which the piece went admirably; and he made his exit amidst "the most general applause she ever heard." This is a very satisfactory account, as we may depend upon

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LIVERPOOL, APRIL 29<sup>th</sup> 1816

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it—which we cannot do on newspaper criticisms.

She added, "I don't know why the play has not yet been repeated; a few days I believe will decide the determination of the managers in his behalf. I hear they wish him to act some other character instead of Sir Pert<sup>r</sup>, which, if he does, he will be lost, for it will be the general opinion that he failed in that—and if he plays Shylock he brings Kean's friends upon him before he has sufficient hold of the town to crush any attempt of party."

You see poor Bibby has his hands full and a very difficult card to play. These London managers are hard fellows to deal with. I should not be surprised if the real object is their wish to make a three years engagement with Bibby—which they hinted at when he first applied, in case he should succeed, but which he told me he should not agree to on any account.—One thing is certain, that it must do him great good with American audi-

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LIVERPOOL, APRIL 29<sup>th</sup> 1816

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ences that he has played in a London theatre with success.

Having said this much about Bibby, I have little more to add; for I have nothing interesting new in the present round of my existence to write about. Davidson had a letter from James Renwick some days since, dated at Paris which he was about leaving for Holland on his way to England. I hope to see him here before long.

Give my affectionate regards to Mrs. Bradish & the girls, and if the worthy Governor has returned, shake him heartily by the hand for me and give my good wishes to the rest of the household.

Your friend

W. I.

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LIVERPOOL, MAY 9<sup>th</sup> 1816

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*Liverpool, May 9<sup>th</sup> 1816.*

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

By the Rosalie, under care of Capt. Murray, I sent a Trunk of clothes to my Brother Ebn<sup>r</sup> in which are a surtout, Blk. Coat and Blk. cloth waistcoat for you. I have also directed a Bookseller to send some books, in a paper parcel, to Messrs. Ogden, Richards & Selden to be forwarded to you—they will probably come by this ship.

I have nothing new to tell you. I wrote to you recently, giving an account of Bibby's first appearance. He plays again tomorrow night in Shylock and Sir Archy.

I was in hopes of hearing from you by the Rosalie, but was disappointed. A letter from you is like a gleam of sunshine through the darkness that seems to lower upon my mind. I am here alone, attending to business—and the times are so hard that they sicken my very soul. Good God, what would I give to be once more with you, and all this mortal coil



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LIVERPOOL, MAY 9<sup>th</sup> 1816

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shuffled off of my heart. I must say however that I have received very kind attention from some of the Liverpool families of late & could easily form a very polite and agreeable circle of acquaintances—but the cares of business, in these gloomy times harass my mind & unfit me for society, and I have therefore avoided it as much as possible. There is one Lady here however, a Mrs. Rathbone with whom I am much pleased—she is amiable, intelligent, and has a charming simplicity of manners. She has the person and looks of our little friend Ann McMasters, and a few evenings since I found her in a gown of a kind of mulberry coloured silk similar to that little Greatheart used to wear. All this made her look like an old acquaintance and there were a thousand recollections of home, and distant friends, & past scenes, conjured up by the trifling circumstance, that almost made my heart overflow.

I met with a Mr. Shepherd at dinner some

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LIVERPOOL, MAY 9<sup>th</sup> 1816

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days since, he is a clergyman, a friend of Roscoe's, and one of the Literati of Liverpool. He is very excentric & facetious in conversation. He has since sent me a book of his editing—accompanied with some civil compliments about my history of N York, and an invitation to dine with him at his residence in the country. I have evaded his invitation, for truly I am not in the vein just now. My dear Brevoort what would I not give to have you with me. In my lonely hours I think of the many many happy days we have passed together—and feel that there is no friend in the world to whom my heart turns so completely as it does to you. For some time before I left New York I thought you had grown cold & indifferent to me. I felt too proud to speak frankly on the subject but it grieved me bitterly. Your letters have convinced me that I was mistaken, and they were like cordials to my feelings.

I am writing very weakly & very garrulously

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LIVERPOOL, MAY 9<sup>th</sup> 1816

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—but I have no restraint in writing to you—  
as I am convinced that what I write will  
be rec<sup>d</sup> with indulgence. You know all my  
failings & foolishness and regard them with a  
friendly eye; but do not let any one else see my  
nonsense.

In the trunk which contains the clothes is a  
number of Lord Byron's Hebrew Melodies.  
It is for Eliza Bradish—will you see that she  
gets it? Let me know how she & her mother  
and all the family do.

Write to me, my dear fellow, as often as you  
have half an hour to bestow on an old friend.

I expect James Renwick here in eight or ten  
days. I suppose he will soon take passage for  
America.

Peter is still at Birmingham but I hope his  
health will permit him to come to Liverpool in  
about a week.

Your friend

W. I.

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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*Birmingham, July 16<sup>th</sup> 1816.*

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

I have tried repeatedly to arouse myself to the exertion of answering your long and delightful letter of May 18th, but found as often, that I might as well attempt to raise spirits from "the vasty deep" as to raise my own spirits to anything like animation. I have been so harassed & over ridden by the cares & anxieties of business for a long time past, that I have at times felt almost broken down in health and spirits. This was particularly the case this spring, when I was for a long time alone at Liverpool, brooding over the hardships of these disordered times. Peter's return to Liverpool enabled me to crawl out of the turmoil for a while, and I have for some time past been endeavouring to renovate myself in the dear little circle of my sister's family. I have attempted to divert my thoughts into other channels; to revive the literary feeling & to employ myself

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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with my pen; but at present it is impossible. My mind is in a sickly state and my imagination so blighted that it cannot put forth a blossom nor even a green leaf—time & circumstances must restore them to their proper tone.

I thank you in the most heartfelt manner for your assistance to my worthy brother Ebenezer. The difficulties he must experience give me more anxiousness than anything else. I hope he may be able to surmount them all, and that he may work through the present stormy season without any material injury.

I am happy to find from your letter that your own circumstances are so good—as to your not having added much to your fortune since I left you, it is not a matter of concern. I was only apprehensive lest you should have experienced heavy losses in these precarious times—and your silence on the subject for a considerable while filled me with uneasiness. I rejoice in the confidence you express of your

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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future prospects, and in the intention you seem to entertain of forming a matrimonial connexion. I am sure it will be a worthy one; and though as a Bachelor I might lament you as lost to the fraternity, and feel conscious that some of those links were broken which as bachelors bound us together, yet I could not suffer myself to regret a change of situation which would give you so large an accession of domestic homeful enjoyment. As to my return to America, to which you advert in terms that fill my heart, I must say it partakes of that uncertainty which at this moment envelops all my future prospects—I must wait here awhile in a passive state, watching the turn of events, and how our affairs are likely to turn out.

“My bread is indeed *cast upon the waters*”—and I can only say that I hope to “*find it after many days.*” It is not long since I felt myself quite sure of fortune’s smiles, and began to entertain what I thought very sober and

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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rational schemes for my future comfort & establishment. At present, I feel so tempest tossed and weather beaten that I shall be content to be quits with fortune for a very moderate portion and give up all my sober schemes as the dreams of fairy-land. But I will make no promises or resolutions at present, as I know they would be like those formed at Sea in a storm, which are forgotten as soon as we tread the shore or the weather grows propitious. This you may be assured of—all my ideas of home and settled life center in New York—and I have had too little pleasure or even comfort in England to wean me from that delightful little spot of earth.

I have written this letter more to account for my not writing a better one. Indeed I have scarcely anything to write about even if I were in vein. I am merely vegetating for the present, and quite out of the way of interesting characters or interesting incidents. On my way up here from Liverpool, I came down by

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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Shrewsbury & stopped for a couple of days with a young gentleman of my acquaintance, at his father's seat a few miles beyond Chester on the border of Wales. In one of our morning strolls along the banks of the Alun, a beautiful little pastoral stream that rises along the Welsh Mountains & throws itself into the Dee, we encountered a Veteran angler of old Isaac Walton's school. He was an old Greenwich outdoor pensioner—had lost one leg in the battle at Camperdown, had been in America in his youth & indeed had been quite a rover, but for many years past had settled himself down in his native village not far distant, where he lived very independently on his pension & some other small annual sums amounting in all to about 40£. His great hobby & indeed the business of his life was to angle—I found he had read Isaac Walton very attentively—he seemed to have imbibed all his simplicity of heart, contentment of mind and fluency of tongue. We kept company



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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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with him almost the whole day—wandering along the beautiful banks of the river, admiring the ease and elegant dexterity with which the old fellow managed his angle, throwing the fly with unerring certainty at a great distance & among overhanging banks, and waving it gracefully in the air to keep it from entangling, as he stumped with his staff & wooden leg from one bend of the river to another. He kept up a continual flow of cheerful and entertaining talk, and what I particularly liked him for was, that though we tried everyway to entrap him into some abuse of America & its inhabitants, there was no getting him to utter an ill natured word concerning us. His whole conversation and deportment illustrated old Isaac's maxims as to the benign influence of angling over the human heart.

I wished continually that you had been present, as I know you would have enjoyed with exquisite relish, this genuine Angler, &

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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the characteristic scenes through which we rambled with him. I ought to mention that he had two companions, one a ragged picturesque varlet, that had all the air of a veteran poacher & I warrant could have found every fish pond in the neighbourhood in the darkest night—the other was a disciple of the old philosopher's, studying the art under him & was son & heir apparent to the Landlady of the Village tavern.

This amusing rencontre brought all the beauties of old Isaac Walton to my recollection—and awakened so many pleasant associations and rural feelings that I have had a hankering ever since to take a ramble in Derbyshire, where I believe the scene of his book is laid—and if I can only muster up spirits enough to take a solitary excursion for a week or ten days, I do not know but I shall go that way as soon as the rainy weather, which has prevailed for some two months past, has given place to a little gleam of summer and

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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sunshine. Should that be the case, I may pick up something in my rambles to scribble to you about—but it is very possible that dismal letters from N York may intervene & take away all disposition from the excursion. I cannot go into notice of the many very interesting anecdotes of my friends which your letter contains. I am much gratified by the prospects of McT——s settling in N. Y. and making such an agreeable matrimonial connexion. The Catons arrived at Liverpool since I left there. Peter dined in company with them and was very much pleased with them. I shall make a point of cultivating the acquaintance of Betsey Caton should I meet with her & she be disposed to be sociable. As to your concern in business with McT—— I think it might prove a very advantageous connexion—and he is certainly a charming companion—but beware of partnerships—they throw you at the mercy of another person's discretion; over whose judgment or

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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inclination you may have no control. You can make your fortune without perplexing or thwarting yourself with anyone. From the little I have seen of business I am satisfied there is nothing that a man should be more wary & considerate about, than entering into partnership.

Long before this reaches you Renwick will have returned and you will have had many a long talk with him about his travels. I have not been able to enjoy his society in Europe as I expected. We made a charming tour in Wales together last summer—and I had anticipated a delightful journey to Scotland; but I had to halt in Liverpool to attend to business, and then again I have troubles.

Remember me affectionately to Mrs. Renwick and her family. I envy you the happy hours you will pass at their summer retreat. I recollect the place as a beautiful one—but Mrs. Renwick has a talent of diffusing happiness around her wherever she is.

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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I must also beg you to remember me most heartily to my worthy inmates at Mrs. Bradishes, particularly that good man & true Gov<sup>r</sup> Wharton, who I hope will never have need to break the Guinea he got from me in London. I trust his worthy compeer Walker is yet with you, as usual *on the wing for Virginia*. I hope to find him unflown on my return.

I wrote some time since to Eliza Bradish and hope the letter reached her in safety, as I would not have all the secrets it contained known to the world on any account. Give my warmest remembrances to her and her mother, and intreat the latter to refrain from further purchases, lest she ruin herself with good bargains.

I am extremely pained to hear from you of the continued ill health of Serena L——If her father wishes to preserve her from following the lovely beings that have been swept from her side—he should send her at once to the south of France—were she to go out there

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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in the early part of the Autumn and remain in those climates until next summer she might be fully restored—but the misfortune is that these expeditions are always taken too late. I beg you to give my particular remembrances to her and her sisters.

This is a sad lackadaisical scrawl but I had no idea, when I began that I should have been able to scrawl so much. Do not let the meagreness of my letters discourage you from writing. In my present listless & comfortless state of mind your letters are inexpressively gratifying—and the last I received I have kept by me as a cordial against low spirits.

Give my sincere regards to your worthy parents and your sister and believe me my dear fellow

Most truly yours

W. I.

If that worthy little Tar Jack Nicholson is with you tell him I return him a thou-

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BIRMINGHAM, JULY 16<sup>th</sup> 1816

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sand thanks for his letter and will answer it soon.

I am afraid that we must give up all expectation of seeing Gouv Kemble out here.— The disappointment will be great to us all; but I hope his present scheme will be a profitable one, in which case I shall not repine—I would write to him but he is such a bird of passage that it is like shooting flying; there is no knowing when a letter would reach him.

I shall be happy to hear that James K. P. is married to G—— and divorced from the Analectic. I think James is in the way of fortune and preferment, if he has spirit & judgment to manage his opportunities, & I think he will make a good husband & she certainly will make an excellent wife. But his connexion with the magazine, tho' it yields present profit, is I am afraid of no advantage to his literary reputation, for the Naval Chronicle is, in every respect, executed in his worst style.

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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 6<sup>th</sup> 1816

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*Birmingham, Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> 1816.*

MY DEAR BREYOORT:—

I received some time since your letter of Sept. 8th, and feel most grateful for these repeated proofs of kind recollections especially when I consider the poor returns I make. You threaten to charge me with something more than want of punctuality if I do not write oftener and I am sensible my silence exposes me to many hard imputations, but I cannot help it—I can only say it is not for want of having you continually in my thoughts and near my heart, nor for want of the constant desire and frequent resolve to write. But some how or other there has been such a throng of worldly cares hurrying backward & forward through my mind for a long time past, that it is even as bare as a market place; and when I do take hold of my pen, I feel so poverty struck, such mental sterility, that I throw it down again in despair of writing anything that should give you gratification.



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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 6<sup>th</sup> 1816

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In fact I was always a poor precarious animal—but am just now worse than ever. So bear with my present delinquency & perhaps at some future moment, when the fit is on me and I am fresh of thought & ready of word (as I sometimes am when I least expect it) I will repay you tenfold.

In my last letter, which I am ashamed to say was written so long ago as July last, I talked of an excursion into Derbyshire and promised you particulars if anything presented worth writing about.

Not having been in a narrative mood since my return, I have suffered so long a time to elapse, that impressions made on my mind have been effaced—incidents have lost the freshness of novelty and all the little associations of thought, & feeling & fancy that constitute the enjoyment of a ramble and the charm of its recital have completely evaporated. To attempt to give you a detail therefore would be useless, though I cannot help

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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 6<sup>th</sup> 1816

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talking a little about it, as I have scarcely anything else to furnish out a letter, and as I know it will bring up a thousand agreeable recollections to your mind of similar rambles you have taken in this country.

According to arrangements made by letter with Peter I met him at Buxton, to which place he travelled from Liverpool, in the identical Tilbury in which you and he performed your Scottish peregrinations. I arrived rather late in the evening so that he had dined & gone out; but as I knew his old haunts I asked the way to the theatre & was shewn to what had once been a barn, but was now converted to the seat of Empire & the epitome of all the Kingdoms of the earth. Here I found Peter enjoying with the most perfect complacency & satisfaction, some old stock play, which he had seen performed a hundred times by the best actors in the world, & which was now undergoing murder & profanation from the very worst. You know of old his

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accommodating palate in this particular; and what relishing appetite he will either "feed on the mountain" or "batten on the moor." The worst of the matter however is, that in his unbounded good will towards the vagrant race, he takes the whole company under his protection and won't allow you to laugh at any of them. This troop seemed almost an establishment—the Manager, his wife & daughter performed in the play and four of his children danced a garland dance. I understood the establishment was somewhat on the plan of poor Twaits' theatrical *commonwealth*—& the company divided on an average of about 7/6 each per week.

At the hotel where we put up we had a most singular & whimsical assemblage of beings. I don't know whether you were ever at an English watering place, but if you have not been, you have missed the best opportunity at studying English oddities, both moral and physical.—I no longer wonder at the English

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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 6<sup>th</sup> 1816

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being such excellent caricaturists, they have such an inexhaustible number & variety of subjects to study from. The only care should be not to follow fact too closely for I'll swear I have met with characters & figures that would be condemned as extravagant; if faithfully delineated by pen or pencil. At a watering place like Buxton where people really resort for health, you see the great tendency of the English to run into excrescences and bloat out into grotesque deformities. As to noses I say nothing of them, though we had every variety. Some snubbed and turned up, with distended nostrils, like a dormer window on the roof of a house—others convex and twisted like a Buck handled knife & others magnificently efflorescent like a full blown cauliflower. But as to the persons that were attached to their noses, fancy every distortion, tubercle & pompous embellishment that can be produced in the human form by high and gross feeding, by the bloating operations of malt

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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 6<sup>th</sup> 1816

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liquors, by the rheuming influence of a damp foggy vaporish climate. One old fellow was an exception to this, for instead of acquiring that expansion and sponginess to which old people are prone in this country from the long course of internal & external soaking they experience, he had grown dry & stiff in the process of years. The skin of his face had so shrunk away that he could not close eyes or mouth—the latter therefore stood on a perpetual ghastly grin; and the former on an incessant stare. He had but one serviceable joint in his body which is at the bottom of the back bone, and that creaked & grated whenever he bent. He could not raise his feet from the ground, but skated along the drawing room carpet, whenever he wished to ring the bell. The only signs of moisture in his whole body was a pellucid drop that I occasionally noticed on the end of a long dry nose. He used generally to shuffle about in company with a little fellow who was fat on one side and

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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 6<sup>th</sup> 1816

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lean on the other. That is to say, he was warped on one side as if he had scorched before the fire; he had a wry neck, which made his head lean on one shoulder—his hair was snugly powdered and he had a round, smirky smiling apple face with a bloom on it like that of a frost bitten leaf in Autumn. We had an old fat general by the name of Trotter who had, I suspect, been promoted to his high rank to get him out of the way of more able and active officers, being an instance that a man may occasionally rise in the world through absolute lack of merit. I could not help watching the movements of this redoubtable Old Hero, who, I'll warrant had been the champion & safe guard of half the garrison towns in England, and fancying to myself how Bonaparte would have delighted in having such toast & butter generals to deal with. This old lad is doubtless a sample of those generals that flourished in the old military school—when armies would manoeuvre & watch each other for months;

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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 6<sup>th</sup> 1816

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now and then have a desperate skirmish and after marching & countermarching about the "low countries" through a glorious campaign, retire on the first pinch of cold weather, into snug winter quarters in some fat Flemish town, and eat & drink & fiddle through the winter. Boney must have sadly disconcerted the comfortable system of these old warriors by the harassing restless cut & slash mode of warfare that he introduced. He has put an end to all the old *carte and tierce* system in which the cavaliers of the old school fought so decorously as it were with a small sword in one hand and a chapeau in the other. During his career there has been a sad laying on the shelf of old generals who could not keep up with the hurry, the fierceness and dashing of the system; and among the number I presume has been my worthy housemate old Trotter. The old gentleman, in spite of his warlike title, had a most pacific appearance. He was large and fat—with a broad hazy massive face, a sleepy

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eye and a full double chin. He had a deep ravine from each corner of his mouth, not occasioned by any irascible contraction of the muscles, but apparently the deep worn channels of two rivulets of gravy that oozed out from the huge mouthfuls that he masticated. But I forbear to dwell on the odd beings that were congregated together in our Hotel. I have been thus prolix about the old general because you desired me in one of your letters to give you ample details whenever I appeared to be in company with the "great and glorious" and old Trotter is more deserving of the epithets than any other personages I have lately encountered.

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Nov. 13th. From the foregoing scribbling you will perceive that after setting out with many apologies for having nothing to say, I had absolutely got into a most garrulous vein, and had I not been interrupted I believe I



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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 13<sup>th</sup> 1816

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should have scribbled off a very long & very flippant letter. I was obliged however to break off to attend to some other matter and have not been able since to get into the narrative vein again. As I hear the Pacific is about sailing from Liverpool I must e'en hurry off this letter as it is, lest another long period elapse before you get a line from me. Should I at any time feel in the mood to give you some more Derbyshire Sketches I will not fail to take pen in hand.

I must now say a word or two in reply to your letter of the 8th Sept. I rejoice to find that Mac is absolutely linked to Miss Caton, and wish all happiness to their union. I have not met with the Catons in England, though I have heard of them. They were greatly admired & noticed at Cheltenham. The Duke of Wellington paid them particular attention to the great annoyance of many dowagers who had daughters anxious for fashion & notoriety.

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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 13<sup>th</sup> 1816

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Your account of the brevity of the old lady's nether garments really distresses me—what will become of the world when these land marks of primitive decorum & staid discretion are carried away by the tide of fashion. If she does not return to her former sobriety of apparel and demean herself like a most grave & reverend young gentlewoman, I insist that you take Flora from under her guardianship. By the way, I cannot help observing that this fashion of short skirts must have been invented by the French ladies as a complete trick upon John Bull's "women-folk." It was introduced just at the time the English flocked in such crowds to Paris. The French women you know are remarkable for pretty feet and ankles and can display them in perfect serenity. The English are remarkable for the contrary. Seeing the proneness of the English women to follow French fashions, they therefore led them into this disastrous one; and sent them home with

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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 13<sup>th</sup> 1816

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their petticoats up to their knees exhibiting such a variety of sturdy little legs, as would have afforded Hogarth an ample choice to match one of his assemblages of queer heads. It is really a great source of curiosity & amusement on the promenade of a Watering place, to observe sturdy English women, trudging about in their stout leather shoes, and to study the various *understandings* brought to view by this mischievous fashion.

I must conclude as this scrawl will be too long. When you write next let me know something about the movements of that great Scavenger Swartwout & how his peat marshes came on, how are Mr. & Mrs. Cooper making out, where he is acting &c; what is Charles Nicholson doing—&c.

Remember me most affectionately to Mrs. Renwick and her family & let me know when the worthy professor quits this transitory state—of celibacy.

Give my warmest regards to your good lady

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BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 13<sup>th</sup> 1816

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Hostess, and also the ladies of the little parlour.—I wrote to the old gentlewoman a long while since, when I sent her Moore's Sacred Melodies. I expect an answer from her.—Remember me to Johnson & the rest of the household.

Yours most heartily

W. I.

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BIRMINGHAM, DECEMBER 9<sup>th</sup> 1816

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*Birmingham, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> 1816.*

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

Since I last wrote I have received your letter of October 16th. I congratulate you with all my soul on the marriage of your sister with our invaluable friend Renwick. It cannot but prove a happy union, and must add largely to your means of domestic happiness. I trust, my dear fellow, providence is laying a solid foundation for the welfare of yourself and your relatives and that you will all go on to flourish in well merited and honorable prosperity.

I feel deeply sensible of the sympathy you evince in my cares and troubles. I assure you however that they were chiefly occasioned by my apprehensions for my connections, and being now confident that my brothers in New York will be able to weather the storm and spread their sails cheerily on the return of fair weather, I shall not let present difficulties give me any uneasiness. I thank you again

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BIRMINGHAM, DECEMBER 9<sup>th</sup> 1816

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and again for your kind assistance to my worthy brother the Major. He is one of the most excellent little men living and I feel any good office done to him ten times more than if it were rendered to myself. I beg you will continue to give him an occasional call. Your advice will often be of service to him as you have a better idea of general business than he probably has, from his being exclusively occupied by one branch of trade.

Frank Ogden and his brother Peter passed a couple of days in Birmingham, not long since. Frank gave me a great many entertaining anecdotes about the establishment at the Battery and its dependent colony, and made me completely homesick. Your letters also, have frequently the same effect. They contain so many allusions to old jokes that have passed between us—so many characteristic sketches of persons and scenes about which we have so often gossiped and laughed in our little chamber councils, that they

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awaken a thousand recollections and delightful associations. After all, it is the charm of existence to have some crony who exactly jumps with our humour; in whose company we can completely unbutton and throw loose the garb of cautious reserve in which our minds are generally so straightly clad—and can give every thought and whim free scope. I do delight in these snug confidings, wherein we canvas the events of the day and amuse ourselves with the odd characters and circumstances we have witnessed. It is really doubling existence, and living over past moments with increased enjoyment; for there seems to be more brightness in the reflected gleams of gay hours, than there was in their original sunshine.

You will smile when I tell you that, after all the grave advice once I gave you about getting married, I really felt regret on fancying, from the purport of one of your letters, that you had some serious thoughts of the kind;

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and that I have indulged in selfish congratulation on finding nothing in your subsequent letters to warrant such an idea. All this too, notwithstanding that I wish you happiness, and am certain that the married state is most likely to insure it. But we are all selfish beings. Fortune by her tardy favours and capricious freaks seems to discourage all my matrimonial resolves, and, if I am doomed to live an old bachelor, I am anxious to have good company. I cannot bear that all my old companions should launch away into the married state and leave me alone to tread this desolate and sterile shore and it is a consoling and a cherished thought with me, under every vicissitude; that I shall still be able to return home, nestle down comfortable beside you, and have wherewithal to shelter me from the storms and buffetings of this uncertain world. Thank heaven I was brought up in simple and inexpensive habits, and I have satisfied myself that, if need be, I can resume them without



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repining or inconvenience. Though I am willing, therefore, that fortune should shower her blessings upon me, and think I can enjoy them as well as most men, yet I shall not make myself unhappy if she chooses to be scanty, and shall take the portion allotted me with a cheerful and contented mind. I am writing you a queer rigmarole letter containing no news in return for your delightful letters which are perfect chronicles of domestic events. You have the best knack of writing domestic letters of any one I know—every sentence presents me a picture, or gives me a bulletin about some one or another of my friends and the very careless, ready manner in which they are dashed off gives them truth and spirit. I wish I had something to give you in exchange, but just now I am sterile. Birmingham anecdotes would give you little entertainment. Yet I must say I have found many good people here, and some few that are really choice. Among them I must especially mention my

particular friend the Revd. Rann Kennedy, of whom I may some day or other give you a more full account. He is a most eccentric character, and is both my admiration and amusement. He is a man of real *genius*—preaches admirable sermons—and has for a long time past been on the *point* of producing two or three poetic works, though he has not as yet *committed* any of his poetry to paper. He however says he has it all in his brain—and indeed has occasionally recited some passages of it to Peter and myself that have absolutely delighted us. With all this he has the naïveté of a child; is somewhat hypochondriacal and in short is one of the queerest mortals living. He is a great favourite of Doctor Parr's and is very anxious to make me acquainted with that formidable old Grecian. He has two or three likenesses of Parr hanging about his house and the old fellow is a great deal at Kennedy's when in Birmingham to the great annoyance of Miss Kennedy. For Parr is a

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great gourmand and epicure and when he dines with any of his particular friends is very apt to extend his domineering spirit to the concerns of the larder and the kitchen, and order matters to his own palate; an assumption of privilege which no true housewife can tolerate.

I have not seen Peter for four months past. In fact not since our little excursion into Derbyshire, which I delight to look back upon, as a green spot in this barren year. I should have joined him before this at Liverpool but he has been continually giving us hopes of his coming up here, and we now look confidently for him in a day or two to remain and eat his Christmas dinner with us. You cannot think how heartfelt the gratification is at these little family assemblages, particularly with us who are "strangers and sojourners in the land" and see nothing but gloom and troubles around us. You have no idea of the distress and misery that prevails in this country; it is beyond the power of description. In

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America you have financial difficulties, the embarrassments of trade and the distress of merchants but here you have what is far worse, the distress of the poor—not merely mental sufferings—but the absolute miseries of nature, hunger, nakedness, wretchedness of all kinds that the labouring people in this country are liable to. In the best of times they do but subsist, but in adverse times they starve. How this country is to extricate itself from its present embarrassments, how it is to emerge from the poverty that seems to be overwhelming it, and how the government is to quiet the multitudes that are already turbulent and clamorous, and are yet but in the beginning of their real miseries, I cannot conceive, but I have somehow or other rambled away into a theme which would neither edify nor amuse you, so we will not pursue it.

I have ordered Mr. Muncaster to forward the books you wrote for and shall occasionally send such new works as I think you may

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relish; except it be such light popular works as are likely to be immediately reprinted in America at a much cheaper rate.

The books lent me by Colonel Gibbs are at Liverpool and when I go down there I will pack them up and take care that he shall receive them in good order. You may tell him I shall be happy to be of any service to him in Europe.

I wish when next you see Mrs. Renwick, you would give her my congratulations on the various changes and increasings of her family. I think I can see her, the centre of a happy domestic system, which is seasoned and gladdened by the emanations of her generous heart. God bless her! say I—and grant that the happiness she delights to shed around her may all be reflected back upon herself—and then I'm sure she will be the happiest of mortals.

Remember me likewise to your worthy parents, who are enjoying the greatest bless-

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ing of old age, that of seeing their children prosperous and happy.

I feel greatly indebted to my good friend Mrs. Bradish for dreaming so often about me, and indeed I value it as no trifling visitation of kindness & good will, that she who has so many domesticated with her occasionally, should bestow such particular recollection upon me. I am glad to hear such favorable accounts of Eliza's health, and that the dissipation of Elizabethtown has agreed with her so well. How I should delight to spend a cosy hour in the little parlour! Well, well! We shall all get together again by and bye and have merry times once more.

You mention the prosperity of the theatre. I wish you could interest yourselves for the Johnsons, they are old friends of mine and both Peter and myself are very anxious for their success. Ellen Johnson is a charming girl and I think must prove a good actress. I have never seen her perform. How is Bibby

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making out? I presume he is giving touches of Kean as I perceive he acts some of Kean's characters. How does his affair with Mary Bailly go on?

Give my best regards to the worthy Governor and the rest of the household. I am  
my dear Brevoort yours ever

W. I.













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